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Assistance in mine clearance

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Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The issue of mine action has been a concern of the General Assembly since 1993. In its resolution 52/173 of 18 December 1997, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined both in his previous reports to the Assembly on assistance in mine clearance (A/49/357 and Add.1 and 2, A/50/408, A/51/540 and A/52/679) and in resolution 52/173, as well as on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to the above-mentioned request. It provides information on the activities of the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as those of other bodies and non-governmental organizations involved in mine-action activities. It reports on mine-action programmes in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia (in particular Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, including Eastern Slavonia), the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mozambique. The report also addresses the functioning of the Voluntary Trust Fund.

3. In response to the various requests made by the Assembly in resolution 52/173, the responsible entities of the United Nations have continued and enhanced their humanitarian work in the area of mine assistance. Their response to those requests is described in the present report. Special note should be made of the transfer of mine-action responsibilities from the former Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, now known as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, United Nations Secretariat.

II. Enhanced coordination: assumption of mine-action responsibilities by the Department of Peace-keeping Operations

4. The fundamental objective of reform, as expressed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform (A/51/950), is to narrow the gap between aspiration and accomplishment. A number of measures and proposals have been advanced which have effectively strengthened the management structure and the policy formulation process of the United Nations system, while greatly enhancing coordination. Mine action is an illustration of this.

5. Despite the growing accomplishments made in the effort to reduce the number of and eliminate landmines, they remain a constant concern in over 60 countries. The issue is one of crucial importance to the United Nations and the international community. Because the extensive use and destructive power of landmines have become critical items on the international agenda, the Secretary-General decided the issue should be addressed in the dual context of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

6. A new integrated arrangement was developed to strengthen further the response of the United Nations in order to meet effectively the expectations of mine-affected countries and communities. Since October 1997, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat has been serving as the focal point within the United Nations system for all mine-related issues and activities. It is in this context that the Department assumed coordinating responsibilities for mine action, including the management of the Voluntary Trust Fund. The Department further assumed the responsibility for unconditional humanitarian mine action.

7. Mine action refers to all those activities aimed at addressing problems faced by civil societies as a result of landmine contamination. The essence of mine action, however, is not about weapons, but about people. Its objective, though technical in practice, is humanitarian and developmental in consequence. It is to recreate an environment in which people can live safely, where economic health and social development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination, and where the needs of victims are addressed.

8. United Nations mine action consists of four complementary core components: (a) mine awareness and risk reduction education; (b) minefield survey, mapping, marking and clearance; (c) assistance to victims, including rehabilitation and reintegration; and (d) advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines and support a total ban on anti-personnel mines.

9. The Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (hereinafter referred to as the United Nations Mine Action Service), is the operative focal point within the United Nations system for all mine-related activities. It is dedicated to the reduction of the suffering caused by landmines and their impact upon people and communities. The Service strives to ensure greater interaction between the United Nations system and its partners and the work of the international community. Further, it aims to assist Governments, communities and civil society as a whole.

10. The United Nations Mine Action Service is responsible for ensuring an effective, proactive and coordinated response by the United Nations in any country contaminated by landmines. Addressing the problem of contamination through a holistic approach allows maximum utilization of all available resources. A coordination policy eliminates duplication, enhances efficiency and sustains humanitarian mine action. The Service, in consultation with other partners, will, *inter alia*, establish priorities for assessment missions, provide technical guidance for training, coordinate support to United Nations programmes, study and evaluate progress made in the development of technologies, maintain an information clearing house, develop a quality management system, develop standard operating procedures and standards, facilitate a coherent and constructive dialogue with the donor and international communities on the mine issue, promote consciousness-raising activities through advocacy and coordinate the mobilization of resources.

11. To develop such a policy and plan of action with regard to landmines, an innovative process of coordination has been initiated. Two coordination mechanisms have been established to support the process, both chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action supports the inter-agency coordination of mine-action initiatives and activities. Its composition includes representatives from the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Steering Committee on Mine Action supports the coordination of United Nations mine-action initiatives with non-United Nations partners. In addition to those members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group mentioned above, it includes, *inter alia*, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL).

12. Two principal documents were developed in 1998 under the auspices of and with the full support of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action. The first, entitled "Mine action and effective coordination: United Nations policy", is the main United Nations policy paper on mine action and appears in annex II to the present report. The second, a portfolio of mine-related projects, presents a global picture of United Nations mine-related projects, their objectives, implementing partners, financial needs and financing mechanisms. The international community and all United Nations agencies were given the opportunity to review the draft texts when they were circulated to all Member States at a meeting held at United Nations Headquarters in April 1998.

13. Addressing mine action in a complementary and coordinated manner, both at the field and headquarters level, requires that appropriate attention be given to issues of national ownership, sustainability and capacity-building. These issues are of particular importance, ensuring that in countries with long-term needs, mine-action programmes are sustainable and have from the outset, as a key component, the development of a national and/or local capacity.

14. To improve continuous coordination within the United Nations system, all mine-action activities will be organized in consultation with the United Nations Mine Action Service and, as appropriate, with the resident and humanitarian coordinators in the field. Member States, non-governmental organizations and other entities concerned with the problem of landmines should be encouraged to coordinate their activities with the Service and with the United Nations local authorities responsible for mine action in the field. The Service, as a central repository and clearing house for information, will be responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of mine-related information, including information on technology.

15. The document entitled "Mine action and effective coordination: United Nations policy" and the key principles it encapsulates will provide a sound basis for United Nations mine action and allow all efforts to be mutually reinforcing. The Secretary-General considers that the effective implementation of this policy within the United Nations system has become an issue of priority.

III. Convention on the Prohibition of the use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction

16. Past attempts had been made to address seriously what is now recognized by the international community as a global landmine crisis. Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects was the first measure taken to regulate the use and transfer of all

landmines and it represents a minimum international norm for belligerents on this issue. Amended in May 1996, Protocol II pertains to internal as well as international armed conflicts. As amended, the Convention would prohibit the use of remotely delivered anti-personnel mines without effective self-destructing and/or self-deactivating mechanisms. Under the terms of the Convention, as amended, all anti-personnel mines should have a minimum metal content, and the transfer of non-detectable mines, as well as the transfer of mines to any entity other than a State would be prohibited. At the end of an armed conflict, States parties to Protocol II would be obliged to remove or assist in the removal of all mines laid by them. Protocol II will enter into force as binding international law six months after 20 States have notified the Secretary-General of their consent to be bound to it. Sixteen States have so far accepted to be bound by Protocol II.

17. Recognizing that the conditions of the 1980 Convention were a step in the direction of banning anti-personnel mines but concerned by the humanitarian extent of the problem, the international community agreed to explore further action. In October 1996, the Government of Canada hosted the International Strategy Conference, "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines", at Ottawa. The Conference received the active support of 50 Governments, the United Nations, ICRC and ICBL. At the conclusion of the Conference, the Government of Canada invited all Governments to return to Ottawa in December 1997 to sign a treaty prohibiting the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, thereby inaugurating what is now known as the Ottawa process.

18. A draft treaty was prepared by the Government of Austria and circulated to Governments and international organizations active in the landmine issue. Formal treaty negotiations were concluded in September 1997, when the Government of Norway hosted the Oslo Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines, with invaluable guidance from the Government of South Africa as chair of the Conference. Ninety-one countries took part as full participants and 38 as observers. The United Nations was present as an observer, as were ICRC and ICBL. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also known as the Ottawa Convention, was formally adopted on 18 September 1997. On 3 and 4 December 1997, the Treaty was opened for signature at Ottawa, and it is now deposited with the United Nations in New York. Article 17 of the Convention stipulates that a State becomes party to the treaty six months after the deposit of its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Addressing the Oslo Conference, the Secretary-General pledged the support and the commitment of the United Nations towards the aim of a total ban on anti-personnel mines.

19. The fortieth ratification of the Convention by Burkina Faso ensured that the treaty will enter into force on 1 March 1999. The swift completion of the ratification process is testimony to the recognition by the international community of the seriousness of the landmine problem and the urgency with which it needs to be addressed. As at October 1998, there were 133 signatories to the Convention and 45 ratifications.

20. States adhering to the conditions of the treaty agree never to use, develop, produce, stockpile or transfer anti-personnel mines, or to assist anyone else in doing so, under any circumstances. Each State must agree to the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines within its territories within four years of the date that the treaty enters into force for it. A limited number of landmines for use in the training of detection, clearance and destruction techniques will be permitted. Each ratifying State must destroy emplaced anti-personnel mines within its territories within 10 years of the date that the treaty enters into force for it. Measures must also be taken to protect civilians until mine-clearance work is completed. Severely mine-affected States may petition for extensions of up to 10 years at a time if they are unable to complete the clearance and destruction process in the time allowed.

21. There is a general obligation on the part of States which are in a position to do so to provide support for mine clearance, mine-awareness programmes and assistance to mine victims, including their care, rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration. It was commonly accepted among most of the participants that the humanitarian merits of the anti-personnel mine issue were fundamental in getting Governments to sign the convention.

IV. Advocacy and mine-awareness education

A. Advocacy

22. In his address at the opening of the Oslo Conference in September 1997, the Secretary-General asserted that the elimination of landmines had become truly a global cause, propelled by the demands of citizens everywhere. Gradually, the extent and severity of the problem is reaching the average citizen. Public consciousness of the landmine crisis,

for example, was heightened significantly in 1997 with the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to ICBL and its coordinator, Jody Williams. In a few short years, the work of Ms. Williams and ICBL took the idea of a total ban on anti-personnel mines from a grass-roots campaign to an instrument of international cooperation. Through the tireless actions of committed non-governmental organizations and dedicated individuals who are advocating compliance of the Convention and are working towards the total eradication of anti-personnel mines, a larger audience is being reached.

23. It will be a primary responsibility of both the United Nations and the States parties to the Convention to ensure that the key conditions of the Ottawa Convention are observed by its signatories. As focal point for all United Nations mine action, the United Nations Mine Action Service will be in a position to coordinate system-wide advocacy initiatives and programmes that promote awareness of the issue and ultimately seek the total eradication of all anti-personnel landmines. The newsletter of the Service, *Landmines*, for example, is an easily accessible and highly informative tool. The on-line education project of the United Nations, *Schools Demining Schools*, launched in Mozambique through its *CyberSchoolBus* programme, used the Internet to enlist primary schools and students around the world in assisting in the demining of schools and playgrounds in infested communities. The strength of this programme is chiefly due to the responsiveness of civil society, both in Mozambique and elsewhere.

B. Mine awareness

24. The term "mine awareness" carries a specific meaning and a defined set of objectives directed towards severely contaminated countries. The humanitarian element of its message is, however, so compelling that it can also be conveyed to a wider audience. Awareness is the public information component of mine action that is intended to raise consciousness levels and educate individuals in affected countries. Within contaminated countries where mines represent a clear and present danger, mine-awareness programmes are directed at communities, aid agencies and peacekeepers.

25. At the country level, particularly in affected communities, mine awareness has become a necessity because of the increasing number of accidents. They occur among the unsuspecting civilians and experienced relief workers, and this happens for three reasons. First, individuals are unaware of the existence of mines and the dangers they pose. Second, they may be aware of mines but they lack the appropriate knowledge to help reduce the risk mines pose. Third, individuals are aware of mines and even know how to minimize risks but, out of necessity, they often continue to practice high-risk behaviour, such as gathering wood or grazing animals.

26. As the lead agency for mine awareness, UNICEF defines this activity as a communication strategy which is aimed at reducing the number of casualties caused by landmines and unexploded ordnance through appropriate, coordinated and well-targeted programmes of public information and education for communities living with the threat of mines. The strategy has two principal objectives: to increase community knowledge of the threat of mines through public information and to initiate and institutionalize a process of behavioural change through mine-awareness education.

27. In the past year, UNICEF undertook several awareness initiatives including, most importantly, the development of guidelines and standards for mine-awareness programmes, participation in meetings, and the production of posters, information kits and technical manuals.

28. Mine-awareness activities in contaminated countries seek both to educate and involve the civil society. Programmes conducted by the United Nations provide detailed information on the identification of mines and the dangers they represent, and they seek to teach safe behaviour.

V. Review of United Nations mine action

A. Impact of landmines

29. Protracted wars, regional conflicts and internal struggles have left the fields, roads and borders of over 60 nations contaminated with millions of landmines. In many of these countries it is civil society, particularly women, children and those living off the land, which is most vulnerable to the physical and psychological torment of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, and to unexploded ordnance. National and local approaches to the problem of clearance have existed for decades. Mine-action agencies and international humanitarian programmes are, however, a relatively new and distinct response. Most are less than 10 years old and have accomplished much in terms of saving lives, but the principal reason for their creation is that the full extent of the landmine crisis is now understood to go

beyond the clearance issue. It is now recognized that a fundamental need exists explicitly to address humanitarian implications. This includes taking into account how landmines affect the socio-economic recovery of war-torn communities; how their presence denies people a means of livelihood; how they can further marginalize the poor through migration to overpopulated cities; and how they can traumatize the coping mechanisms of individuals and families.

30. Landmines, in one form or another, are nearly as old as military conflicts themselves and historically have been a prominent battlefield weapon. New technologies and ever-changing tactics have, however, revealed their military utility to be quite modest in defensive operations and their strategic importance limited. As conventional weapons go, landmines are inexpensive and require practically no technical knowledge to use. Today, a plastic unit smaller than a compact disc can be purchased for as little as US$ 3, and thousands can be deployed in a few hours.

31. Anti-personnel mines are easily detonated, virtually undetectable and can be held in the palm of one's hand. Yet their destructive capacity can dismember an adult or kill a small child. Anti-personnel mines can be used virtually anywhere, contaminating an area long after a conflict has ended and the combatants have gone and imposing heavy and enduring psychological burdens on those who remain behind.

32. International humanitarian law and military doctrine have enacted clear requirements for the responsible use of landmines, however, these codes have too frequently been disregarded. The International Committee of the Red Cross has reported that in the numerous major conflicts that have erupted since the beginning of the Second World War, anti-personnel mines have seldom been deployed in accordance with existing legal norms and acknowledged military doctrine. Even in combat situations, trained, professional armies have failed properly to deploy anti-personnel mines and have persistently been derelict in their responsibility to remove them. The genuine concern remains that despite their limited strategic value, landmines are still used far too extensively and indiscriminately.

33. As long as the laying of landmines through internal conflicts continues, the risk imposed on civil societies will remain constant. The absolute disregard by combatants of the long-term consequences on a country and its people must lead to some control measures for these weapons. Mine action has for some time now gone beyond the activity of clearance, realizing that clearance alone is insufficient in attempting to reduce the sufferings caused by landmines.

B. Country programmes

34. The primary responsibility for taking action against the presence of landmines lies with the Government of the affected State. It should assume the obligation of overall coordination and management of any national mine action programme. When requested, the United Nations system has assisted contaminated countries in creating sustainable national capacities in the preparation and implementation of any indigenous programme. Through the United Nations Mine Action Service and the newly initiated coordination approach, the United Nations will continue to honour such requests. Mine-action centres in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mozambique are the focal points for fully fledged mine-action programmes that include clearance, training programmes, awareness activities and assistance to victims. At present, 30 countries receive some level of United Nations technical assistance, ranging from awareness programmes to assessment missions.

1. Afghanistan

35. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, in the mine-action programme for Afghanistan, has continued to maintain productive activities in the face of numerous operational and political challenges. In 1997, the programme exceeded its mine-clearance target by 15 per cent. A number of expansions and changes took place during the past year that positioned the programme to expect an even more productive year in 1998. Unfortunately, the United Nations suspensions in southern Afghanistan during April/June 1998 and at Kabul during July/August 1998 were a setback. Based on results for the first seven months of 1998, year-end outputs will be on a par with the previous year but not up to the full capabilities of resources available, simply because those resources have not been able to work.

36. The mine-action programme for Afghanistan is the largest mine-action operation in the world and includes a national headquarters, the United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan. Partner non-governmental organizations directly implement the four field-based components of awareness, survey, technical training and clearance. The United Nations Mine Action Centre, located at Islamabad, in turn provides financial and operational management and promotes international community awareness.

37. Resources for mine action are allocated to a priority system and activities that are aimed at facilitating the return

and resettlement of local populations, improving food security, supporting United Nations and donor-identified rehabilitation projects, and supporting initiatives to discourage poppy and other illicit cultivation.

38. The total human resource strength of the mine-action programme for Afghanistan has increased from 3,600 Afghans in 1996 to over 4,000 in 1997/1998.

39. In 1997, a record 33 million square metres of high-priority mined area and 49 million square metres of former battlefield area were cleared in 18 of the 29 provinces of Afghanistan. From January to July, 15.9 million square metres of high-priority mined area and 13.6 million square metres of former battlefield area were cleared. Some 105,000 devices were destroyed during the same period.

40. The programme has continued to focus on cost efficiency, maintaining an overall clearance cost per metre of around US$ 0.60. In particular, the cost efficiency of using dogs has continued to improve with costs reduced from US$ 0.44 per square metre in 1995 to US$ 0.25 per square metre in 1997/1998. Accidents have been significantly reduced during 1998 as a result of stressing safety and team management practices and not simply clearance.

41. In 1997, 30 million square metres and 50 million square metres of battlefield area in 13 provinces of Afghanistan were technically surveyed and marked (a level 2 survey). During the first half of 1998, an additional 17 million square metres of mined terrain and 15 million square metres of battlefield area were surveyed. Survey team capacity increased from 27 teams in 1997 to 29 in 1998. The total survey progress from its inception to 30 July 1998 is 210 million square metres of mined area and 150 million square metres of former battlefield area.

42. A variety of different approaches has been used for mine-awareness programming, including direct training by mobile teams, community-based training and broadcast of mine-awareness messages through the radio and mass media. During 1997, almost one million Afghans received training. This significantly exceeded the target of 600,000 set for that year.

43. The mine-action programme for Afghanistan, through a partner non-governmental organization, has maintained a sophisticated and comprehensive national database and information system which incorporates all level 1 and level 2 survey data, the progress of all clearance activities (minefield and battle area clearance), mine-awareness data, training data and civilian mine accident data.

2. Angola

44. Since the implementation of the United Nations demining programme, the National Institute for the Removal of Explosive Devices (INAROE) has been established with its headquarters at Luanda, and seven operational demining brigades have been trained and deployed. Four regional headquarters have been established to coordinate action at the provincial level.

45. Over the past year, the efforts of the United Nations international staff were, to a large extent, directed towards capacity-building in the management of clearance operations at the headquarters level, together with facilitating the effective execution of clearance operations at the brigade level.

46. The deterioration in the political and security situation in the country which occurred towards the end of the reporting period has, however, had a negative effect on the clearance activities of both INAROE and the demining programme, resulting in the suspension of clearance operations in several provinces since mid-July 1998.

47. Despite the difficulties encountered in implementing these programmes, a number of objectives were achieved: a total of 277,471 square metres were cleared by the INAROE demining brigades; a national policy on training standards, certification for deminers and approval of standard operating procedures has been implemented; systems for procurement, administration, finance, human resource management and logistics have been developed, and Angolan staff trained; Angolan supervisors have been trained so that they will gradually replace international staff at both the regional and brigade levels; INAROE has institutionally accepted and demonstrated its role as a humanitarian and developmental mine-action organization; and an accountable system for reporting on the use of donor funds has been implemented.

48. The equipment being used by the Angolan demining programme is in need of replacement. On average, 50 per cent of vehicles inherited from the Third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) are unserviceable at any one time. It is therefore recommended that the General Assembly consider the equipment to the Angola Demining Programme as part of the downsizing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola.

49. Local provincial governments have suspended all clearance operations in the Malange, Huambo and Moxico provinces, owing to the deterioration in the security situation. All demining brigades have been withdrawn to within the perimeters of the provincial capital cities.

50. This has also resulted in the withdrawal of all international supervisors to the provincial capitals or to Luanda until the situation has stabilized and the safety of staff can be guarantees. All non-governmental organizations involved in clearance in Angola have suspended clearance operations and withdrawn their equipment and personnel to the provincial capitals.

51. With the current funding level, it seems unlikely that the required additional 11 demining brigades will be trained within the short to medium term.

52. The temporary facilities at the INAROE demining school have deteriorated and should be replaced by more permanent facilities. The Government of the United States of America has offered assistance in this connection. New priorities are currently being established for the future of the programme.

3. Bosnia and Herzegovina

53. Responsibility for mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina was formally transferred from the United Nations to the Government on 1 July 1998. To aid in the transfer of responsibilities from the United Nations Mine Action Centre to the Government and within the United Nations system, a management services agreement was conducted between UNOPS and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations providing the input needed during the transition period. In July 1998, the UNDP assistance programme to the national Mine-Action Programme of Bosnia and Herzegovina formally commenced. The programme provides for management-level training of Government personnel in the four component areas of mine action. The programme also provides for monitoring and quality control of all clearance-related activities.

54. The Mine-Action Programme of Bosnia and Herzegovina is unique in that it combines the resources of military units, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and directly employed Government demining and unexploded ordnance clearance teams. To facilitate coordination, the Programme is responsible for the management of the national mine database, standards for mine action, accreditation of all organizations undertaking mine action and financial resource allocation. The Programme is the technical agency of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Demining Commission. During the period under review, a number of activities took place, as described below.

55. **Mine survey and clearance.** During the period from 1 January 1997 to 31 December 1997, some 6.8 million square metres were declared mine free, making 3,144 houses and apartments safe for habitation. Further, 28,425 mines and 19,572 unexploded ordnance were located and destroyed. An additional 6,800 mines and 28,000 items of ordnance were collected and destroyed through a national amnesty programme. These activities contributed to the steady improvement in the casualty rate. Although still high, with approximately 20 per month killed or injured due to incidents, the figure is significantly down from the 50 per month in 1996.

56. Utilizing funds provided by the Government of the United States of America, the World Bank financed $17 million in commercial contracts to international companies and local subcontractors through the entity Governments. A further $3 million has been made available by the Government of the Netherlands. By the end of 1997, 250 personnel had completed the European Commission training and deployment programme. All military deminers have been retrained and are now carrying out mine-clearance operations in accordance with international standards for humanitarian demining. The Governments of Norway and Canada are funding the purchase of mechanical clearance equipment and other donors are making in-kind contributions.

57. A total of 360 clearance personnel have been trained and equipped and are operating in priority areas. The Government of Denmark provided US$ 870,000 in 1997 for addressing small-scale emergency needs. The Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Italy provided funds for such purposes through the end of 1998. Three non-governmental organizations, Norwegian People's Aid, Handicap International and HELP, have undertake a number of donor funded clearance, survey and training operations.

58. **Mine awareness and risk-reduction education.** The United Nations Children's Fund, in collaboration with the minister of education, has provided materials and technical assistance for the training of teachers to conduct mine-awareness classes. It has also funded a sport-based non-governmental organization to conduct mine awareness after soccer practice sessions. Using volunteers, ICRC has conducted its mine-awareness programmes through the local Red Cross. The Stabilization Force (SFOR) of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) also visited schools to conduct mine-awareness classes and supported electronic media campaigns, linking mine-awareness with an amnesty programme.

59. **National mine database.** The national mine database contains 18,203 confirmed mine-contaminated areas. It also includes a Global Information System (GIS) capability,

which allows for the printing of a wide variety of highly detailed maps. Funding has been made available by the Government of Canada for further mapping and information processing.

4. Cambodia

60. During the reporting period, the UNDP-supported Cambodian Mine Action Centre continued to allocate its clearance resources in accordance with its humanitarian needs, so that mined areas where the resettlement of refugees, internally displaced persons or landless poor were possible and where casualties caused by mines were greatest, were assigned priority. The Centre also engaged in mine-action activities intended, in whole or in part, to reduce risks and casualty rates. These activities included mine awareness, explosive ordnance disposal, mine marking and community mine marking, all aimed at reducing the number of casualties to as close to zero as possible. Overall casualty rates remain unacceptably high, with the Cambodian Red Cross reporting 150 to 200 deaths and injuries per month. However, these rates have fallen significantly, from the nearly 400 per month in the early 1990s.

61. Mine-action activities for the period have been significant: clearance units established by the Centre were responsible for clearing 1.42 million square metres of land and destroying 12,083 anti-personnel mines, 229 anti-tank mines and 36,988 pieces of unexploded ordnance in four provinces. Through nearly 1,800 mine-awareness courses, over 350,000 people were educated. A new training centre was inaugurated at Kampong Chnang, with courses ranging from demining, leadership and supervisory courses to basic medical techniques.

62. The database at the Centre has been expanded, and it is now an integrated system with three supporting sectors: (a) the tabular database, which includes mine-action, socio-economic, mine-awareness, explosive ordnance disposal and mine-casualty data; (b) AutoCAD files, where mine location shapes are digitized into geo-reference files; and (c) a geographical information system, in which tabular data and digitized mined area locations can be combined and displayed in useful form.

63. A significant achievement during the period under review was the organization of a workshop on land-use planning in mined areas, which took place at Battambang. Discussion at the workshop was on the difficult issues of the relationship between clearance operations and development, and on planning the use of demined land in accordance with the priorities of the Centre. A commitment was made by all parties involved to strengthen integrated planning prior to mine clearance in order to ensure that demined land benefits those for whom it is intended.

64. Top priority was given to the planning and execution of a national survey to complete the level 1 survey of the mine and unexploded ordnance threat in Cambodia, which is scheduled to begin in early 1999. Production has also begun on a draft document on standard operating procedures for demining. The Centre has organized and will host a conference on landmines in Cambodia from 26 to 28 October 1998.

5. Croatia

65. It has been estimated that there are approximately 120 million square metres of surface area potentially contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnance in Croatia.

66. In Croatia in 1995 and 1996, there were 580 victims of mines, 102 of whom were children. According to current data, 26 people have been killed and 30 wounded by mines in 1998. With the emphasis of the international community on encouraging the return of refugees and displaced persons, these numbers may rise. A comprehensive information base on mine casualties was made available in September 1998, through a joint project between the United Nations and a Croatian non-governmental organization.

67. One of the primary aims of the United Nations Mine Action Centre upon its establishment in June 1996 was to encourage the Government of Croatia to establish a national mine action centre, as an operational counterpart to the United Nations Centre which would then train national personnel to run a national mine-action programme. In February, the Government of Croatia adopted a law establishing the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC), which is responsible for managing all mine-action activities. The Croatian Centre reports to an executive council, consisting of eight members representing the relevant ministries.

68. In March 1998, operational responsibility was transferred from the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES) to UNOPS. On 1 July 1998, the United Nations Centre and CROMAC became fully integrated. The main functions of CROMAC are to conduct minefield surveys and marking, manage mine-clearance and mine-awareness activities, and conduct quality assurance of the mine-clearance work. It also maintains the databases which form the mine information system.

69. Currently, United Nations personnel have retained the responsibility to manage the mine information system, conduct and train quality assurance personnel, conduct and train personnel for level 2 surveys, develop project proposals for clearance to be put out to tender, conduct and coordinate mine-awareness activities, fund raise and liaise with the international community regarding the mine situation in Croatia. Their responsibilities will be handed over to the Croatian staff as more people are employed by CROMAC. Some United Nations staff will remain as technical advisors at the request of the Government of Croatia.

70. Until recently, all mine clearance in Croatia, excluding that conducted in the area formerly outside Croatian control (i.e., the UNTAES region of Eastern Slavonia and Baranja) was conducted by the Croatian Army, by MUNGOS (the state demining agency) or by the special police.

71. Progress has been made concerning the law on demining in Croatia. This law, originally adopted in March 1996, was amended in June 1998. The amendment allows international organizations to participate in mine clearance in Croatia and transfers the responsibility for quality assurance from the Ministry of Interior to CROMAC.

72. Mine clearance is now being conducted in a more systematic way, with CROMAC managing the contracting procedure for awarding contracts. Project proposals are written by the regional mine officers of the Centre, according to the priorities assigned by national and local authorities. These projects are then advertised and bids invited for the contracting of mine clearance. To date, contracts for 12 projects funded by the Government of Croatia and three projects funded by international donors have been awarded by CROMAC. All future projects will be managed in the same way.

73. The quality assurance of mine clearance is actually conducted by CROMAC. During the reporting period, CROMAC employed two deminers. Six more deminers will be hired to be trained by the United Nations Quality Assurance Officer to conduct quality assurance activities. Of the 39 million square metres which have been demined during the reporting period, one square kilometre has been quality assured. Quality assurance is currently being conducted by mine-sensing dogs in conjunction with deminers. A donation by the Government of Switzerland and a Swiss non-governmental organization are funding some of the operations. Quality assurance is being conducted for all ongoing clearance and for previously cleared areas. The quality assurance teams are finding mines and unexploded ordnance in areas which have been cleared previously, and the original clearance company is reclearing the area until a satisfactory level of quality assurance is attained.

74. The Croatian Mine Action Centre has hired nine deminers and will employ another two to form survey teams which will work in conjunction with mine-protected vehicles fitted with protective kits and steel wheels, to identity the boundaries of the minefields. Digital global positioning system equipment will be used to plot the exact edges of the minefields. This information will be used for mapping and transferred within the mine information system. The survey process for the whole of Croatia started the first week of September 1998.

75. In the area of management information, all previous minefield records in the management information system were those handed to the United Nations by the Croatian Army and the former Krajina Serb Army. Since the integration of the United Nations and Croatian centres, more minefield records, mine-clearance records and mine-incident records have been received from the Ministry of Interior and the Croatian Army. Mine-clearance records are also now being provided by mine-clearance companies. Currently there are approximately 45,000 mined areas (with roughly 220,000 mines) and 2,000 suspected minefields recorded in the database. Comprehensive information on mine casualties was to be made available in September 1998. A geographical information system was purchased in 1998, which allows data relating to settlements, municipalities and counties to be plotted over the minefield data.

76. Since the establishment and integration of CROMAC, positive steps have been taken by the Government to address the mine-awareness education of displaced persons. This remains an area in which the United Nations is promoting more transparency, particularly as regards visitors to Croatia in the tourist season. However, general media coverage of the mine issue has increased enormously and the whole profile of mine action has been augmented. The openness of local communities to mine awareness has also improved since the integration took place.

77. The majority of funding for mine clearance in Croatia has come from the Government. In 1998, $11.8 million was requested from the donor community for funding to develop national mine-action capacity directed towards United Nations designated priority areas.

6. Iraq

78. The estimated 5 to 10 million landmines and unexploded ordnance in the three northern governorates of Iraq continue to claim the lives of many people. Mine casualties reportedly reached over 6,000 between 1991 and

mid-1997, 2,400 of them were fatalities. An estimated 205 million square metres of the arable land of the region cannot be cultivated because of landmines. The implementation of humanitarian programmes, including settlement rehabilitation programmes, are likewise being severely hampered by lack of access to significant areas. In recent years, laudable efforts have been made by international agencies and non-governmental organizations to demarcate some of the key areas containing landmines and to carry out a range of clearance operations. While, however, some progress has been made, given the scale of the problem the impact has been small. In addition, mine-awareness campaigns have also been conducted in affected areas, including in many primary schools.

79. In mid-1997, UNOPS signed a memorandum of understanding with the office of the Iraq programme and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to conduct the mine-action programme in northern Iraq under the provisions of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) of 14 April 1995. There were at first problems related to the reorganization of the United Nations mine-action sector and to the identification of a suitable commercial implementing partner. Because of this, the programme commenced late in comparison with those of the seven other implementing agencies in the north.

80. The total allocation for this sector under the first three phases of the programme was US$ 6.17 million. The United Nations Office for Project Services deployed international staff to the field in November 1997 and programme implementation has been rapid. The administrative and logistical networks were established, an international subcontractor has been deployed into the region and training and operations had commenced by February 1998.

81. Phase one has been successfully completed, with 120 local deminers, medics, team leaders and supervisors trained and deployed in three teams each in the Erbil, Dohuk and Suleimaniyah governorates. Training and operations have been established in Choman and Maidan. The Diana and Halabja prosthetic workshops have been reopened, and both are producing protheses at full capacity. An international consultant has conducted an in-region initial assessment of the requirements for a database on minefields and mine victims, which is continuing to be developed.

82. Phases two and three have been combined, and three more clearance teams have been recruited, trained and deployed. A new prosthetic workshop is being opened in Dohuk governorate. Survey and minefield marking sections have been trained and deployed with each clearance team. Three dog teams have been brought into the region to assist the clearance teams and the survey sections with minefield reduction. The database is being established and a region-wide survey conducted to provide accurate, current information for it. Minefield maps and data on victims will be produced to assist with mine-action operations and planning, and these will be made available to all United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and local authorities.

83. There are two international non-governmental organizations conducting mine-action activities in the region, with which UNOPS has been in close liaison although it does not have any formal affiliation with them.

84. The Mine Advisory Group (MAG) has been operating in the region since 1992. It conducts a full range of activities, including those of manual clearance, explosive ordnance disposal survey, limited database management and mine-awareness activities. It operates mainly in Suleimaniyah and Erbil governorates, with limited survey activity in Dohuk. the Group has been carrying out a comprehensive mine-awareness campaign, partly funded by UNICEF, which has been very successful in reaching target populations, particularly children, the most heavily mined districts.

85. Norwegian People's Aid has recently increased its operations to include two manual clearance teams that operate in the Suleimaniyah governorate. It also conducts explosive ordnance disposal operations. The non-governmental organization shares the UNOPS operations training base in Maidan but its major difficulty is in bringing the equipment vital to its work into the region.

86. One of the major limitations to planning and allocating of resources in the region is the lack of accurate and detailed information on minefields and mine victims. The MAG database is useful but is limited in the appropriateness of the information it provides for planning purposes. Also, MAG does not have a mapping overlay capacity. This issue has been addressed by UNOPS and hardware and software have been procured to establish a database that will eventually produce detailed maps complete with minefield overlays.

87. A major restriction is that the Government of Iraq has not released copies of minefield records held in military archives and it has not provided maps indicating minefield locations in the region. Clearances have not been provided for vital equipment for the global positioning system to be brought into the region to assist with accurately recording minefield locations.

7. Lao People's Democratic Republic

88. The national unexploded ordnance programme of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, known as UXO LAO, is supported by UNDP and UNICEF and is now in its third year of operation, having originated from the establishment of the Trust Fund for the Lao People's Democratic Republic in August 1995.

89. In general programme development terms, UXO LAO has progressed through its emergency start-up phase and is now in a period of balanced consolidation and controlled expansion. As has often been the case with other programmes, UXO LAO had to implement field operations quickly, and it achieved this with the assistance of several implementing partner organizations which now supervise and support provincial activities. In consolidation and capacity-building terms, the national programme is now working to harmonize management planning and procedures across the operations and support function areas. In parallel, the organization is assisting in the prioritized integration of clearance of unexploded ordnance with other development programmes. These activities are ongoing and focus on management consolidation so as to facilitate future expansion, and on developing work plans for limited expansion.

90. Programme achievements from August 1997 to July 1998 include the clearing of 2,000,040 square metres; the destruction of 53,700 unexploded ordnance devices; visits to 462 villages and the briefing of 111,595 people by community-awareness teams.

91. Cash contributions to the Trust Fund from August 1997 to July 1998 totalled US$ 2,941,504, and in-kind contributions for the same period totalled approximately US$ 3,824,647.

92. Considerable progress has been made in developing management information, reporting and analysis systems. Of particular note has been the preparation of systems for the assessment of bomb data records, and mechanisms to work jointly with the National Geographic Department to enhance mapping for UXO LAO and other national development programmes.

93. UXO LAO undertakes humanitarian work and is enhancing its role as an organization which provides a component service for national development. As information gathering and analysis is improved (in parallel with the extension of UXO LAO operations), the programme is able to plan and coordinate with district, provincial and national development authorities in a more rationalized and effective manner.

94. The scale of unexploded ordnance and mine contamination within the Lao People's Democratic Republic is on such a vast scale that it is difficult to comprehend the problem without witnessing it. Accident rates are still too high, and the pressure to clear land is growing. Enhanced performance indicators for effectiveness have been developed and are being refined. Safe and reliable enhancements for clearance productivity remain a challenging requirement.

95. The need for long-term international support remains essential for success and for the overall reduction of risk for the most vulnerable communities within the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Assistance and continued support for the UXO LAO Trust Fund is essential and, without this, the current level of operations will not be sustainable during 1999.

8. Mozambique

96. The Accelerated Demining Programme commenced operations in the Maputo province in September 1994 with a staff of 450 Mozambicans supported by 45 expatriate staff. The extant project document was finalized in March 1997 and extended UNDP sponsorship of the programme through January 2000. The estimated budget requirements for the Programme for the three-year period is US$ 9,668,222.

97. The Programme currently has a strength of 497 personnel. The expatriate component of the staff has been deliberately reduced to five as the programme progresses towards the ultimate goal of becoming a truly national capacity. Since its inception, the programme has continued operating in Maputo province but it has expanded to include operations in Inhambane province, controlled by regional headquarters established at Maxixe, and operations in Gaza province. The headquarters of the Programme is located at Maputo, and the programme maintains its own training facility at Moamba which, besides meeting the training needs of the Programme, has also trained personnel for two non-governmental organizations active in activities related to mine clearance: Handicap International and the Norwegian People's Aid.

98. During the reporting period, the Programme has had four survey teams, 10 clearance platoons, a dog team and an internal quality assurance team operating in the field. Mine-clearance operations have been conducted in 28 separate locations during the same period. About 1.4 million square metres have been cleared, and 1,739 mines and 610 items of unexploded ordnance destroyed. Although significant, these figures do not represent the measures by which the Programme assesses its effectiveness. The Programme

focuses on the socio-economic impact that its operations have on affected communities. Thus, all areas cleared have been of major national, provincial or district significance. The period has been one of consolidation for the Programme, and its basic structure has remained unchanged throughout. After three years of continuous clearance operations, deminers and key staff took an extended period of leave for training. The results have been immediate and measurable, with an average increase in productivity of the clearance platoons of 37 per cent between August 1997 and August 1998. Equal effort was devoted to improving basic management and supervisory skills, and the improved support available to the field operations is expected to increase productivity further.

99. Mine-detection dogs have been introduced during the period, and trials have been conducted to evaluate the integration of mechanical clearance systems. To this end, a quality assurance cell has been established, which assesses the performance of each platoon at least once per month, and a formal technical working group has been established. The group considers ideas, concepts and innovations which could further improve the operational procedures and results of the Programme.

100. The budget for the Accelerated Demining Programme in Mozambique for 1997 was US$ 2,540,776, of which US$ 1,098,916 was expended during the period from August to December. The budget for 1998 is US$ 4,207,342, of which US$ 1,238,431 is for capital expenditure items. Of the US$ 2,968,911 allocated to the operating budget, US$ 1,224,339 had been expended by 30 June.

101. The National Demining Commission (CND) which was created by government decree in 1995, is the national entity responsible for the policy development and coordination of mine clearance. In June 1996, the UNDP programme of technical assistance to CND was begun. Its general objective is to support the executive level of CND. In December 1997, an evaluation of the technical assistance programme was completed, and it was concluded that CND was capable of improving its performance. Proposals for the implementation of certain options are currently being developed and are to be finalized by the end of 1998.

102. Other organizations involved in mine clearance in Mozambique include: the Hazardous Areas Life-Support Organisation (HALO) Trust, which has been operating in Mozambique since 1993 and currently employs about 200 Mozambicans; Norwegian People's Aid, which has been operating since 1994 and employs about 550 local deminers and 30 mine detector dogs; and Handicap International, which has been coordinating mine-awareness activities throughout Mozambique; and the Krohn company of Germany which is involved in mechanical mine-clearance activity.

103. Significant achievements since August 1997 include: attendance at and contribution to international conferences; visits by VIPs; exchange visits and training with other operators and non-governmental organizations in Mozambique; integration of mechanical systems into the Programme; introduction of mine-detection dogs into the Programme; improvements in operational planning systems; improvements in production rates; improvements in logistical and other field support; and employment of quality assurance officer and establishment of internal quality assurance capability.

C. United Nations system

1. Department for Disarmament Affairs

104. The Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat followed closely the negotiations on a prohibition on landmines throughout 1997, and it was represented at both the Oslo Diplomatic Conference on an International Total Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines and the Ottawa International Strategy Conference, "Towards a Global Ban on Anti-Personnel Mines". In 1998, it contributed to the formulation of the United Nations policy paper on mine action and effective coordination by chairing the Working Group on Advocacy, Verification and Compliance established by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group. The Department is working closely with the core group of States to draft reporting formats for the transparency measures called for in article 7 of the Ottawa Convention. It has begun designing a database to receive such information in coordination with the United Nations Mine Action Service. The Department has not been involved in mine clearance per se or in humanitarian, social and economic assistance activities related to clearance.

2. United Nations Children's Fund

105. The United Nations Children's Fund is promoting the ratification and signing of the Ottawa Convention. All regional directors and country representatives have been instructed to approach and lobby the ministry or ministries responsible for the ratification process in developing countries. The 38 national committees of UNICEF are assisting in the promotion of ratification in the industrialized countries.

106. The Fund has taken all possible measures to cooperate and coordinate its activities closely with those of relevant United Nations departments and agencies. It has integrated its mine-awareness and victim assistance programmes, both at headquarters and at the field level, within the overall framework of the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service.

107. In February 1998, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and UNICEF announced a cooperative effort to press for ratification of the Ottawa Convention at the earliest possible date. They also pledged to work for donor countries and other partners to ensure comprehensive and complementary programmes for mine clearance, destruction of stockpiles and rehabilitation of victims. In April 1998, the Permanent Mission of Canada, OAU and UNICEF held a tripartite meeting on African ratification of the Ottawa Convention.

108. The Fund has participated in United Nations inter-agency assessment missions on mine action, led by the United Nations Mine Action Service.

109. The Fund is presently supporting programmes on mine awareness and victim assistance in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mozambique and is in the process of undertaking several new programmes in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Somalia, Sri Lanka and the Sudan.

110. The Fund is also in the process of preparing a set of guidelines for mine awareness, in coordination with non-governmental organizations. Two productive meetings have been previously held at Florence in 1996 and at Geneva in 1997. A technical meeting is scheduled for December 1998, in which the draft guidelines will be assessed and finalized.

111. In June, together with the Government of the United States of America, the company DC Comics and the Organization of the American States (OAS), UNICEF launched the Superman and Wonder Woman comic book on mine awareness for children in the Central American countries of Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Subsequently, UNICEF distributed the comic book to all of its national committees to raise awareness of the problems of landmines. All UNICEF offices in mine-affected countries received copies of the comic book in order to strengthen their mine-awareness programmes directed at children. Other activities directed at children also included videos, radio shows and puppet theatres.

3. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

112. With the elimination of landmines as one of its highest priorities, UNHCR has launched country programmes in mine awareness, training, detection, marking and actual clearance. During the reporting period, UNHCR has also participated in the joint inter-agency assessment missions, led by the United Nations Mine Action Service.

113. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, six independent clearance teams are carrying out clearance operations in support of returning minority populations, under the direction of international advisors financed by the Governments of Australia, France and the Netherlands. A total of US$ 2.6 million has been allocated by UNHCR in 1998 for equipment, training and mine clearance to support activities in priority areas. The International Committee of the Red Cross has reported that the accident rate during the first half of 1998 has dropped from 50 incidents per month to approximately 20.

114. Needed activities in Angola have been seriously impeded owing to lack of funds. The Office of the High Commissioner has entered into an agreement with the Mines Advisory Group for the survey and demarcation of mine fields along access roads and major transport routes and activities have included selective clearance of high priority areas. The activities of UNHCR have, however, been seriously constrained owing to political events and lack of funds. An updated assessment will be carried out when conditions allow.

115. The Office has supported a mine-awareness campaign in Thailand and has allocated US$ 500,000, as part of the repatriation programme to Cambodia for mine-action activities in priority areas of return, in close coordination with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre and non-governmental organizations. In Western Sahara, the safe return of 120,000 Saharaoui refugees currently in Algeria and northern Mauritania required the clearance of roads and areas where transit sites will be established. In coordination with Norwegian People's Aid (funded by the Government of Norway), UNHCR will undertake mine-awareness campaigns in the Tindouf camps in Algeria.

4. World Food Programme

116. The World Food Programme is involved in mine action in the context of relief and recovery programmes.

117. In Angola, WFP has a special operation, known as "Mine surveying and clearance in support of feeder road rehabilitation", which has recently been focused on the

Bengo province in north-eastern Angola. The second phase of the programme, carried out during the latter part of 1997, was funded by Germany. Although the funding was received by June 1997, implementation was delayed until September 1997 because of military tension in the area.

118. The total area cleared by the operation was 51,726 metres. Over 8.2 kilometres of roads were cleared, at an average cost of US$ 3 for every metre cleared. The clearance crew was composed of two German nationals and 12 Angolans from Kunene province. The mine clearance enabled 20,000 internally displaced persons to return to their areas of origin. The next phase of the operation is planned for the second half of 1998.

119. In Bosnia, WFP has been involved in mine-awareness training as part of its programme to support small-scale rehabilitation projects. The Programme has also supported a local non-governmental organization in organizing a week-long training programme at a camp in central Bosnia, which was attended by children between the ages of 8 and 18 from all parts of Bosnia.

120. In collaboration with the Cambodian Red Cross and the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, WFP is identifying long-term internally displaced persons and former returnees for a resettlement project (known as "Protracted emergency target area populations") on recently demined agricultural land. The assistance provided by WFP would be food aid assistance to families for clearing the fallow land in the recently cleared agricultural areas, as well as for the construction of infrastructure such as roads, ponds, wells etc.

121. In the reconciliation areas, including Phnom Malai, Pailin and Anlong Veng, WFP is working with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre. Food-for-work and land-clearance projects are being carried out in Phnom Malai and in Kampot (Phnom Vour). A collaborative effort by WFP, the Cambodian Mine Action Centre and UNICEF is intended to maintain minefield markings through the work of identified vulnerable families. The latter are compensated by a monthly food ration.

5. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

122. The past year has seen laudable progress in curtailing the use of landmines and in reducing their impact. The humanitarian implications of landmines are, however, still of enormous concern. An unconscionable number of women and children, poor villagers and other civilians continue to step on mines as they collect water, go to school or attempt to return home after years of displacement. Conflicts in several countries continue to be marked by the deliberate use of mines to disrupt social and economic activity. Landmines also impede the work of humanitarian agencies and add to the economic cost of assistance.

123. The Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with its humanitarian partners, works closely with the United Nations Mine Action Service on all issues of concern to the humanitarian community. The Office shares all relevant information on the humanitarian impact of landmines with the Service and supports the work of multidisciplinary missions designed to assess the nature and scope of the landmine problem in countries which have requested United Nations assistance.

124. The report of a multi-country study on the development of indigenous mine-action capacities was published in February 1998. It has been disseminated widely to affected countries, donors, non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and other interested groups. As noted by the study, mines are first and foremost a humanitarian concern and this is a central tenet of the recently released United Nations mine-action policy paper. The findings of the study were used extensively in the development of United Nations policy which stipulates that those who are most endangered receive priority attention.

125. The United Nations consolidated appeal remains an important tool for the mobilization of resources. The Office will continue to work with all concerned parties to secure timely and adequate resources for the initiation and continuation of mine-action activities in affected countries.

6. United Nations Office for Project Services

126. Under the new coordinated system, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is maximizing its role as a service provider by implementing integrated mine-action and capacity-building programmes on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNDP and other partners. The United Nations Office for Project Services plays a critical role in serving as a bridge, from emergency initiatives to development projects and continuous coordination of mine-action activities.

127. In order to provide a rapid focused response capacity to support all aspects of mine-action programmes, UNOPS established a Mine Action Unit, which consists of seven Professional staff and a number of technical consultants.

128. Over the past year, the Mine Action Unit has been expanding its database on personnel, equipment suppliers, contractors and non-governmental organizations in order to

establish a comprehensive network of professional and technical capabilities to support mine-action programmes.

129. The Office develops various contractual modalities to work with donor countries and other organizations that provide personnel, equipment and services as in-kind contributions to programmes. Currently, UNOPS has agreements with a large number of donor countries and non-governmental organizations to provide military or civilian experts to the various programmes on a cost-sharing basis.

130. At the headquarters and country level, UNOPS works closely with the United Nations Mine Action Service and UNDP to provide the necessary support and a timely response to implement and support programmes. Since August 1997, UNOPS has been executing or assisting in the implementation of a number of programmes. In Mozambique, a mechanical mine-clearance project was undertaken on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service and a UNDP project, aimed at supporting the development of the National Demining Commission in Mozambique, was executed. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNOPS assisted in the transfer of the programme from the United Nations Mine Action Service to UNDP and the ongoing execution of the programme. In Croatia, UNOPS executed the programme on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service. In northern Iraq, UNOPS, in conjunction with the United Nations Mine Action Service, has been involved since October 1997 in establishing a comprehensive mine-action programme funded through the oil for food programme. This programme combines all the components of mine action, including support for victim assistance. On behalf of UNDP, UNOPS executed projects in Angola, Chad, Azerbaijan, Somalia and Sri Lanka. It is assisting UNDP in the planning stages of a project in the Islamic Republic of Iran and is serving as a cooperating agency in Cambodia, assisting in the implementation of the mine-action programme on behalf of UNDP.

7. World Health Organization

131. In 1998, the Executive Board of WHO approved a plan of action based on five priority areas, namely surveillance and information, prevention and awareness, emergency and post-emergency care, rehabilitation, and coordination within the United Nations system. The plan of action was endorsed unanimously by the fifty-first World Health Assembly on 14 May 1998 (resolution WHA 51.8).

132. The objectives of WHO include: ensuring that the public health dimension of the mine problem is adequately reflected in overall United Nations policy; developing the public health strategy to meet the needs of mine victims; and formulating country plans, in cooperation with ministries of health of affected States. Together with UNICEF, WHO has drafted the guidelines for assistance to landmine victims and survivors. The WHO plan of action is part of the portfolio for mine-action projects of the United Nations Mine Action Service, and WHO was represented in assessment missions led by the United Nations Mine Action Service.

133. Several meetings with donor countries and member States have been organized by WHO prior to the meetings of the Executive Board and World Health Assembly. A consultation on mine victim assistance was held at Addis Ababa on 8 June 1998, after the first assessment mission, in order to build upon the results of that mission, and to bring together the essentials for a WHO strategy on mine action. The meeting was attended by representatives of the WHO offices in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia and Uganda, and by representatives of UNICEF, Addis Ababa University and Handicap International. Participating countries have formed a multisectoral steering committee in each country to provide a situation analysis of health implications related to the mine problem and of the capacity of the country to respond to it, starting from stakeholder mapping, context and problem analysis in their countries. The results were brought to an interregional workshop for a concerted public health response to landmines, held at Kampala in September 1998, which was funded by the Government of Switzerland. This is particularly important in jointly formulating clear approaches to strengthen the health sector of mine affected countries, including infrastructure for post emergency care and rehabilitation and access to health facilities, to respond to health needs caused by mine injuries in particular, as part of an overall public health strategy to respond to injury and violence.

8. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

134. Since 1996, FAO field offices in affected areas have been requested to regularly provide information on the local situation as regards landmines and its impact on the agricultural sector. More specifically, between June and July 1998, FAO fielded a mission to assist the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the selection and prioritization of agricultural land for clearance.

135. Former wartime confrontation lines, which contain the highest concentration of landmines, constitute some of the most potentially productive agricultural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because many residents of the conflict-affected zones were forced to flee during the war, these areas are now among the highest priority locations for the return

of refugees and internally displaced persons. The presence, or even suspicion, of landmines in these areas severely restricts agricultural production and contributes to continued reliance on imported agricultural products and humanitarian aid.

136. The Organization has assisted the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in formulating a set of criteria for selecting the agricultural land most urgently in need of clearance. The criteria include: (a) assessment of land quality in areas of suspected mine contamination; (b) assessment of population density of those areas; (c) assessment of the importance of agriculture as a source of economic sustainability for the populations of those areas; and (d) assessment of the political and security situation with respect to the return of refugees and internally displace persons (especially the return of ethnic minorities) to those areas.

137. The above-mentioned criteria were used to evaluate locations throughout the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika of Srpska. Of the several thousand hectares of land considered for prioritization, approximately 400 hectares (1,000 acres) were selected as the most urgent for clearance.

138. Funding for agricultural demining is expected to contribute greatly to the economic sustainability of those who depend exclusively on agricultural work for their livelihood, while also reducing the number of deaths and injuries among farmers and their families in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

9. United Nations Development Programme

139. The United Nations Development Programme has formed part of the United Nations mine-action inter-agency reform process since September 1997, and contributed throughout this year to the coordinated preparation by the United Nations Mine Action Service of the final United Nations policy document for mine action.

140. Working closely with United Nations agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and companies, UNDP continued its support to the mine-action programmes in Angola, Cambodia and Mozambique, initially supported by the former Department for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, and assumed responsibility for the Bosnia and Herzegovina programme. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, UXO LAO, supported by UNDP and UNICEF, continued clearing the unexploded ordnance that contaminates 14 of 17 provinces. In early 1998, a new project was initiated in Chad and pilot projects were begun in Sri Lanka and Somalia. Requests for assistance were received from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Yemen. Missions were undertaken in conjunction with other agencies, and through the newly established process of assessment missions coordinated by the United Nations Mine Action Service. Funding pledged and received for programmes and projects totalled $19.7 million, leaving a substantial shortfall against current needs and requests for assistance.

141. To support the growing portfolio of UNDP in this field and to ensure that best practices and lessons learned are shared across regions, a mine-action project was established. The project, composed of four mine-action specialists, is housed within the Emergency Response Division of UNDP and includes a liaison officer to the United Nations Mine Action Service. Its responsibilities include: liaison with the Service and other partner agencies; providing policy guidance; assisting country offices and regional bureaux with technical matters and resource mobilization; and representing the institution at international forums in order to emphasize the importance of building sustainable capacities for mine action. A UNDP policy for mine action that reflects the wider United Nations policy document has been developed and was approved by the Executive Committee, and specific guidelines for the field have been drafted.

142. In addition, UNDP this year has: secured two grants from the United Nations Foundation Inc. to support the socio-economic reintegration of mine victims, and promote mine awareness in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has also launched a process to address the management training requirements of mine-action programmes in-country. This initiative is being developed in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, the World Bank and other donors, with the intention of developing partnerships for mine action with the private sector. Further, UNDP has participated in the international conferences for mine action held at Ottawa, Washington, D.C., Geneva, Johannesburg and Karlsruh, Germany; worked with the Geneva Centre and the United Nations Mine Action Service regarding information requirements; and collaborated on a joint submission to the United Nations Foundation for the conduct of level I surveys in mine-affected countries.

D. Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

143. Indispensable to the work of mine action has been the role of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Some, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross , have been committed to assisting victims through a benevolent programme of medical assistance that has been in existence for 20 years, while relatively new actors, such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which was awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for its work, have energetically advanced the humanitarian nature of the issue, effectively raising the level of mine awareness across a broad spectrum.

1. International Committee of the Red Cross

144. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) acts to help all victims of war and internal violence and endeavours to ensure implementation of humanitarian rules restricting armed violence. It has been given a mandate by the international community to aid the wounded and sick and to take action on behalf of the civilian population affected by armed conflict. All of its actions are governed by the impartial, humanitarian principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the only criterion for action being the needs of the victim. The International Committee of the Red Cross is independent of all governments and international organizations and acts in consultation with all other organizations involved in humanitarian work.

145. The efforts of ICRC in the area of mine action have focused on advocacy, mine awareness and victim assistance. While calling for increased resources for humanitarian mine clearance, ICRC has not been involved in the surveying, marking or clearing of mined areas. It nevertheless recognizes that such mine clearance is necessary if the international community is to reduce the number of victims killed or injured by landmines each month (currently estimated at 2,000) and to enable people living in mined areas to rebuild their lives. It is also vital to the success of economic recovery projects.

146. Since it is likely to be years before certain communities can hope to live free of the threat of mines, an important part of mine action is teaching people how to avoid injury. The International Committee of the Red Cross believes that mine-awareness campaigns are an integral part of the concept of protection of the civilian population, as enshrined in international humanitarian law. As at 31 July 1998, it was running mine-awareness programmes in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. These programmes are community-based and include a media campaign for the general public, a school programme for children and a data-collection component. In Azerbaijan alone, 5,433 teachers have been trained by ICRC to instruct the children in more than 240 schools about the dangers of mines. The International Committee of the Red Cross is also conducting needs assessments in Afghanistan, Georgia, the Sudan and Uganda. In some areas where ICRC is not operational, national Red Cross or Red Crescent societies have begun mine-awareness projects.

147. Direct assistance to victims is also a fundamental element of the field operations of ICRC. In 12 countries where mines are being or have been used, ICRC provides direct medical assistance to the injured and/or trains local medical staff, depending on need.

148. In terms of rehabilitation, ICRC is currently running 22 physical rehabilitation programmes in 11 countries. Between 1979 and 1997 its workshops manufactured nearly 120,000 artificial limbs, many of which went to mine victims. In 1997 alone, it produced 11,300 prostheses, of which 7,200 went to mine victims. These programmes are tailored to each country's social and economic needs and are designed to be handed over in the long term to a local organization or governmental agency. To eliminate the need to import expensive ready-made prosthetic components from abroad, ICRC has introduced new materials and developed special moulds to facilitate low-cost production at the local or regional level.

149. The International Committee of the Red Cross recognizes that an important tool needed for better cooperation and coordination is an effective management information system. By standardizing the flow and analysis of data within a country, needs and constraints are more readily identified, coordination among the various actors is enhanced, the establishment of operational priorities is facilitated and the overall effectiveness of mine action is increased. A document on the mines information system and the factors determining the severity of mine infestation was published by ICRC in December 1997. The implementation of its recommendations will enable the international community as a whole to provide more effective aid to the people and communities whose daily lives are affected by these weapons.

2. International Campaign to Ban Landmines

150. Launched in 1992, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) is a coalition of more than 1,000 non-governmental organizations in more than 50 countries that

work locally, nationally and internationally to ban anti-personnel landmines. It is coordinated by a steering committee of nine organizations, including those already deeply engaged in mine action work. For its efforts in 1997, it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

151. Throughout the reporting period, ICBL has kept up its intense pace of global activity advocating the ratification of the Ottawa Convention. It has also taken on new initiatives, continuing to grow and diversify in an effort to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are enforced and to encourage those States which have yet to sign to do so. The non-State actors working group of ICBL is working to involve non-State actors in the movement to ban landmines. With national campaigns in Colombia, South Africa and the Philippines, the working group is a clear example of the increased involvement of non-governmental organizations in the developing world in the movement.

152. In June 1998, ICBL established a civil society-based approach for monitoring the implementation of and compliance with the Convention. The Landmine Monitor, a reporting system on the Internet for monitoring compliance with the Ottawa Convention, will build upon the expertise and capacities of non-governmental organizations and international organizations systematically to monitor and document the various dimensions of the global landmine problem, including use, production, transfer, stockpiling and victim assistance. By building field research capacities, a global reporting network and independent database, the Landmine Monitor will produce annual reports to coincide with meetings of State parties.

3. Handicap International

153. In Bosnia, Handicap International formed a mine-action non-governmental organization consisting of a management structure, clearance platoon, survey team and community liaison team in the canton of Una Sana. Funds for its first 12 months of operations supplied through the United Nations. It is now formally registered under Bosnian law and has been carrying out mine clearance, surveying and explosive ordnance disposal since October 1997. Handicap International has now secured funding for a further 10 months of operations from the Governments of Canada and France.

154. Handicap International has two mine-action projects in Mozambique. The first of these is the national mines awareness coordination project, in which it coordinates all mine-awareness activities in Mozambique on behalf of the Government. This project also gathers information on both the locations of mines and casualties. This information is stored in the central National Demining Commission database and is used to support clearance organizations in the assigning of priorities. The second project is a proximity clearance programme in Inhambane province, which consists of four self-contained roving teams that have the capacity to carry out explosive ordnance disposal in addition to clearance. This project works closely with the provincial Government and employs several staff members appointed by the provincial Governor.

155. Mine-awareness activities have also been undertaken by Handicap International in Ethiopia and Angola. A new programme has covered all the Somali refugee camps in region 5 of Ethiopia, and consists of the recruitment and training of educators and supervisors; conception and development of teaching aids; education of the refugee population; and coordination with local networks. In Angola, the project is focused on the training of demobilized soldiers in mine awareness. The beneficiaries of this project are demobilized soldiers and the civilian population, particularly high-risk groups such as children and returnees of the four central region provinces.

156. In Afghanistan, Handicap International has developed a quick response team for explosive ordnance disposal, which will become operational before the end of 1998. It now manages a clearance programme in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and is engaged in capacity-building activities as part of the work of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre.

4. HALO Trust

157. Established in 1988, the Hazardous Areas Life-Support Organisation (HALO) Trust is a non-political, non-religious, British-registered charity that specializes in the removal of the debris of war. The HALO Trust concentrates on the humanitarian problem of immediate mine clearance so that other emergency and rehabilitation programmes can commence. It employs 25 international staff and over 2,500 local personnel in clearance programmes in Afghanistan, Angola, Abkhazia, Cambodia, Chechnya, Mozambique and north-east Africa. The operations of the HALO Trust are funded by private donations, Governments and international organizations. In 1997, the HALO Trust cleared 8,112 mines, 59,884 items of unexploded ordnance, 4,141,659 metres of land and 120.5 kilometres of roads.

VI. Essence of mine action

A. The problem and the response

158. The collective reaction of the international community towards the excessive number of landmines deployed, stockpiled and in production is no longer one of casual indifference. The entry into force of the Ottawa Convention confirms that landmines are not merely an isolated issue, but one of international humanitarian concern. Because landmines inhibit rehabilitation and restrain development, the nature and scope of the problem must be defined in a public health and socio-economic context. The fact that mines affect the lives of individuals, their subsistence and the provision of humanitarian assistance is irrefutable. The presence, or even fear of the presence, of a single landmine can prevent small farmers from cultivating their fields, thereby robbing them of their livelihood; it can deny cattle access to grazing pastures, further marginalizing impoverished families, and it can block passage along a primary road, isolating an entire village. Environments that should be safe and conducive to peace-building and reconstruction are too often compromised as a result.

159. Within the larger framework of long-term, post-conflict rehabilitation, capacity must be rebuilt in order to sustain development. Specific criteria can be adopted to ensure that the communities benefit from the most effective and best coordinated assistance possible. Dramatic circumstances caused by emergencies and conflicts, on the other hand, often warrant a swift and complete action. When lives are at stake, delaying any form of benevolent response is unconscionable.

160. Landmines are exceptionally pernicious because they have the power to disrupt both long-term sustainable development and short-term delivery of humanitarian assistance. Wherever they are deployed, landmines pose a real and constant risk, especially to the most vulnerable members of society. Mine action is dedicated to assisting those who live in constant fear, and to reducing the threat of landmines through education and awareness, mapping, clearance and assistance to victims.

161. Historically, the provision of emergency and humanitarian assistance has been unconditional. It is an unequivocal proposition that embodies not only the principles, purposes and spirit of the United Nations as defined by its Charter, but the fundamental right of each individual, to life, liberty and security of person.

B. Activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service

1. Information management

162. The development of an information management system has emerged as a key factor for the effective management of global mine action. The United Nations mine-action community, donors, private companies and non-governmental organizations have acknowledged the need for better information in order to improve the allocation of resources for mine-related activities.

163. In order to respond to the priorities that have emerged from the various conferences and meetings held at the beginning of 1998, an Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) has been established. It has three components. First, a field module for the creation of a common and standardized base for the collection of information, which will facilitate further information processing within the mine-action community. The field module will be a primary information collection tool for mine action centres, organizations performing surveys and agencies involved in mine action at the field level. It will be distributed free of charge to the entities involved in field activities. Second, an information processing module at United Nations Headquarters that will use the data provided by the field module and analyse them to provide the information needed for mine-action monitoring and decision-making at the strategic level. Third, an information dissemination module, which will facilitate the publication of information for specific customers and the general public through the Internet or desktop publishing (such as the monthly newsletter "Landmines").

164. The field module will be designed to be used with a geographical information system. A Swiss development team and the United Nations Mine Action Service are working with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission on the development of the geographical information system. The major problem in establishing it is the availability of digitized maps. Countries that have a digitized mapping capacity have been requested to help the United Nations in this respect.

165. A coordinated information processing structure will be established within the United Nations as a matter of priority. The Swiss project will provide the software, but personnel and technical resources will have to be provided from the United Nations agencies. The second phase of the project will maintain and improve the content of the filed module, based upon experience gathered in the field, as well as developing training in the use of the module. It will also

develop both the information processing module and develop the information dissemination module.

166. The United Nations Mine Action Service will receive additional support from the newly created Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), a foundation established through a Swiss initiative. It will support the United Nations Mine Action Service in the development of IMSMA and of a think-tank for mine action. In 1997, GICHD collaborated in the organization of an annual meeting of managers of mine-action programmes.

2. Information collection on mine action

167. The global landmine crisis is the sum of a broad range of landmine-related problems facing the more than 60 countries believed to be afflicted by these weapons. The scope, nature and degree of affliction, however, varies markedly between individual countries, and this information has yet to be measured with any degree of accuracy or confidence. In addition, details on the extent of assistance that has been provided to mine-affected countries by Member States, regional organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations and, more importantly, the capacity to provide additional assistance, has yet to be satisfactorily measured. The capacity to provide additional assistance has also yet to be satisfactorily measured. Until this occurs, international mine-action requirements cannot be clearly understood and the appropriate assistance programmes cannot be articulated in a coordinated manner.

168. In order to help determine this important baseline data, a questionnaire on mine action was distributed by the United Nations Mine Action Service to all Member States in February 1998. The first section of the questionnaire covered the nature and consequence of the mine problem in affected countries, as well as the effort being applied to overcoming the problem. This included assessing the existing national capacity and national capability to assist other mine-affected countries. The second section of the questionnaire was focused on determining the capacity of other countries to provide assistance, and on identifying the level of support currently being provided to mine-affected countries.

169. With regard to determining the scope of the global problem, the information obtained from the questionnaire has been used by the United Nations Mine Action Service in categorizing Member States into four broad groups. Group 1 consists of countries in which a United Nations-assisted programme is under way or under development. Group 2 consists of countries where the requirement for assistance has been identified but where a programme has not yet commenced. Group 3 comprises countries for which further information is required; this category has two subgroups, one for countries in which a United Nations assessment mission is required, and a second for countries in which the mine situation has yet to be confirmed. The final category is group 4, which comprises countries that do not require United Nations assistance.

170. Countries in group 2 and group 3 can be recategorized as belonging to group 1 or 4, either through the establishment of a United Nations-assisted programme or by confirmation that assistance is not required or is being provided through other means, such as bilateral agreements. The United Nations Mine Action Service and the United Nations agencies undertake this review process on an ongoing basis as the questionnaires are returned and the information analysed.

171. Information on the support available from the international community will assist the United Nations Mine Action Service and United Nations agencies in determining the levels of capability available as part of a response to the problem within a particular country. This will ensure that effective and appropriate solutions are identified and implemented in a timely manner.

3. United Nations assessment missions

172. It is imperative that all information on the mine problem within a particular country is gathered, appraised, analysed and presented in a consistent and transparent manner so as to enable an accurate assessment of the situation to be made. In order to formalize this process, a programme of multidisciplinary and multisectoral assessments was initiated under the management of the United Nations Mine Action Service in March 1998.

173. Assessment missions examine the requirements associated with each component of a comprehensive and integrated mine-action plan. An evaluation is made of the willingness of all parties to support a mine-action programme; the impact of mines on the population from the humanitarian, health, socio-economic and developmental perspectives; the security situation; and local capacities for mine action.

174. Assessment missions are conducted in cooperation with the United Nations coordinator for the country concerned and in consultation with local civilian and military authorities, United Nations departments and agencies (in particular the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and WHO), ICRC, non-governmental organizations, and diplomatic missions and

representatives as required. The information gathered and analysed during the assessment mission is used to determine the requirement and framework for a United Nations-assisted mine-action programme or project to be implemented. In addition, the Government of the affected nation may use the information obtained during the assessment process to obtain support for mine-action activities on a bilateral basis.

175. Since the inception of the programme in March 1998, assessment missions have been conducted in Ethiopia, north-west Somalia, Burundi and Yemen. A planned mission to Rwanda was cancelled upon notification by the Government of Rwanda that the national authorities were addressing the mine problem and that United Nations assistance was not required. In addition, a mission planned for Eritrea in June 1998 was postponed owing to the escalation of the border conflict with Ethiopia. Three additional missions are planned for 1998.

4. National survey

176. National surveys have been referred to in the past as a level 1 or general survey, using the definitions set out in the international standards for humanitarian mine clearance. Previous implementation of these surveys has tended to be focused on searching for and mapping mined areas in preparation for the eventual removal of the mines, rather than on determining the impact and scope of the problem throughout the country prior to developing a plan of action. This narrow approach was developed at a time when mine clearance was regarded as the principal component of mine action. Experience and a greater understanding of the nature of the problem have led to an expansion of the definition of mine action to incorporate other important aspects, all of which must be evaluated in order to determine overall national requirements.

177. A national survey is required in order to measure the impact of the mine problem throughout a country, and the determination of priorities as a result of this process will allow activities and resources to be focused on the areas of greatest need. The data collected during the survey can also be used to assist with ongoing resource mobilization requirements. It can also provide valuable information to donors as to the overall indicative cost of solving mine-related problems. In addition, the results of the survey can be used to review the previously determined requirements, limitations and outcome as appropriate, in order to assist with the planning, development and/or refinement of a national mine-action programme.

178. At the Workshop on Mine-Action Coordination held at Ottawa in March 1998, the need to provide consistent standards for national surveys in order to gather, process and analyse the necessary information and data in an effective manner was identified. After the workshop, a survey contact group was established as the forum for the further development of standards for national surveys. Its first meeting was held at Brussels in May 1998 and resulted in the establishment of a consortium of non-governmental organizations led by the Viet Nam Veterans of America Foundation.

179. The United Nations continues to develop an integrated response to the global mine problem, advocating a flexible, dynamic and transparent approach to implementation. The systematic method of information collection through a variety of mechanisms (questionnaires, assessment mission and surveys) will ensure that countries in need of assistance are identified and prioritized, and that the appropriate activities are undertaken in an effective manner.

5. International standards for humanitarian mine-clearance operations

180. International standards for humanitarian mine-clearance operations have been produced in consultation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and former Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. Traditionally, humanitarian clearance has been based on military methods and standards; however, as the direction and definition of humanitarian mine clearance has developed and changed, there has been an increasing requirement to establish a coordinated approach to humanitarian clearance standards. In June 1996, the Government of Denmark initiated a forum for the discussion of clearance standards and technology which proved a pioneer in the field of international standards. The standards which have been produced provide a framework for the creation of standard operating procedures, which in turn detail the manner in which specific mine-clearance operations are conducted. It is intended that compliance with these standards will increase donor confidence, enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of clearance operations and more importantly, improve safety for the deminers who are involved in the hazardous task of removing landmines.

6. Mine-clearance policy and standard operating procedures

181. The mine-clearance policy and standing operating procedures were produced by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat and are currently undergoing final scrutiny prior to approval, publication and distribution. The procedures detail United

Nations policy and the procedures to be used in mission areas where there is a threat from landmines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. Experience has shown that such situations differ among countries and that it is generally not possible to apply template solutions to mine-related activities within each mission area. Therefore, the policy and the standard operating procedures are designed to allow missions to develop their own such procedures so that they reflect the cultural, environmental and operational conditions of the area concerned.

7. Mine mapping systems

182. In conjunction with the standard operating procedures and international standards, the United Nations Mine Action Service has commenced work on a computer-based mine mapping system which is designed to provide a simple, flexible procedure for graphically illustrating mine-related information. The system utilizes the MapInfo computer program, which is capable of converting the information recorded in the standard operating procedure and international standard formats into maps which can depict any aspect of the information desired. The technology required to support the system is simple enough to ensure that it has the utility and flexibility to allow it to be used in all circumstances. The intention is that large quantities of text and database information can be quickly converted into graphic form, which is particularly important during the early stages of clearance activities. Currently, the clearance unit has commenced building map files on Bosnia, Croatia, Afghanistan, Angola, Guatemala and Tajikistan.

8. Technology

183. Considerable progress in the coordination of technology has been made during the reporting period. A series of international workshops and conferences has provided the United Nations and its partners with the opportunity to develop a consensus and agreement on the modalities of improved coordination and cooperation. In March 1998, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations presented a United Nations policy paper on mine-action technology at the Workshop on Mine Action Coordination held at Ottawa in March 1998. The paper established a number of principles and priorities, and it defined a process which drew together the three principal components of mine-action technology: the needs of the user community; the availability of funding; and an assessment of the technological options. The Workshop supported the need for the United Nations to take this work forward as a matter or urgency.

184. The United Nations reported on the progress of its work to the Conference on Global Humanitarian Demining, hosted by the State Department of the United States of America in Washington, D.C., in May 1998. That meeting helped to clarify the relationship between the United Nations and its partners in mine-action technology, and it agreed to the framework and mechanisms necessary for improved coordination. It was in this context that the Government of the United States of America and the European Union announced an agreement to cooperate with the United Nations on a range of technology initiatives, including the development of common research and development standards, the establishment of a worldwide network of test and evaluation facilities, and a programme of mine-action technology demonstrator projects which would start in 1999. This announcement has given a strong signal to the international community of the benefits accruing from close cooperation and pursuing common objectives.

185. Information comes from a number of sources and varies in form, quality and timeliness. This includes information on technological capabilities provided by States parties to the Ottawa Convention, feedback from ongoing mine-action programmes, reports from professional bodies and institutes, extracts from academic papers and technology journals, and the results of equipment trials and technology evaluation. Improved coordination and cooperation is predicated on universal access to information and there is therefore an urgent need to establish a global management information system of mine-action technologies. Such a system will be linked to other related databases and approved Internet sites. The information requirements of technology coordination are currently being addressed by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining as part of a wider study of the global information needs of mine action.

186. The funding of ambitious technology programmes poses a particular problem. The costs of major equipment, including those for its research and development, deployment and redeployment, operational use, maintenance, repair and upgrading, may involve significant financial commitment and exposure to risk which cannot be made by non-governmental organizations and clearance contractors. Furthermore, investment in technology requires a long-term commitment, and existing methods of mobilizing resources through United Nations Headquarters usually do not provide such a donor commitment. These is therefore a need to identify novel arrangements which would satisfy the requirements of the industry, the user community, the donors and the beneficiaries.

9. Advocacy

187. During the reporting period, the United Nations Mine Action Service has undertaken an aggressive campaign of activities with a view to increasing awareness of landmines and advocacy for their global eradication. These activities have been specifically designed to target a wide variety of audiences, from governmental officials, non-governmental organizations and academics to the private sector, schoolchildren and the media.

188. The United Nations Mine Action Service, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, has developed and implemented a unique on-line project, *Schools Demining Schools*, which delivers information on landmine issues to schools in North America and Europe via the Internet, and links them with children and mine-action personnel in mine-affected countries. The Service has utilized the tremendous outreach potential of the Internet to enhance the quality and quantity of information available through its Web site.

189. In an effort to reach a wider non-traditional audience, the United Nations Mine Action Service has produced, with generous contributions from the Government of Germany, a series of posters with themes of landmine eradication and human rights. The posters are being widely disseminated among teacher foundations, schools and other academic institutions. Furthermore, a bookmark has been produced with a simple yet powerful message, "Landmines destroy life", and it is being distributed through bookstores. Discussions are under way with on-line booksellers to distribute through their marketing channels.

190. The newsletter *Landmines* continues to be published and has secured funding for the next two years from the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Circulation has increased by 75 per cent over the past year. The Service has also responded to numerous requests to deliver presentations to organizations, associations and schools.

10. Resource mobilization

191. The humanitarian objectives and activities associated with mine action, including mine clearance and disposal, mine awareness, risk-reduction education, assistance to mine victims and advocacy to promote a ban on anti-personnel landmines require the commitment of resources by Member States and other partners in the international community. From just the one mine-action programme in Afghanistan 10 years ago, there are now 8 operating under United Nations auspices throughout the world and more are planned in a number of other countries. Beyond country-specific mine-action programmes, the United Nations needs to mobilize resources for regional and global efforts especially in the areas of education, information, advocacy and policy development.

192. The United Nations Mine Action Service, as a focal point, facilitates and monitors the overall mobilization of resources for mine action within the United Nations system. At a time when competing needs are pressing on limited resources, contributions by the donor community are the key to sustaining an expanding mine-action programme throughout the world. Funds and material resources provided by Governments and multilateral partners are the foundation of support for financing and implementing activities that fall under the mine-action umbrella. Coordination of mine action at United Nations Headquarters is sustained almost entirely from donor contributions, and most other mine-related programmes receive the major portion of their resources from funds specifically earmarked for mine action from contributing Governments and multilateral organizations.

193. As needs exceed projected available resources, however, the United Nations will have to develop new strategies to expand the base of contributors and introduce non-traditional donors to mine action. Alliances with the private sector, partnerships between public and private entities, and academia have significant potential for raising consciousness and resources. Media events to explain the issues, reveal the tragedies, highlight the work of the United Nations and broadcast messages of hope to a broad audience also have exceptional educational value and fund-raising potential. More needs to be done in this area, and the United Nations Mine Action Service will consult with other United Nations partners to maximize the collaborative strength that will be required to achieve results.

194. Several funding mechanisms exist for receiving and disbursing funds provided by donors to support and implement mine-action programmes. These include the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance, the Afghanistan Emergency Trust Fund and the country-specific trust funds of UNDP, some of which are specifically for clearance operations in Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mozambique. The Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which is overseen by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, as well as the UNDP trust funds, support mature mine-action programmes which will need to be sustained on a long-term basis. These mine-action programmes focus on building indigenous capacity as part of an overall and integrated socio-economic development programme. The Voluntary Trust Fund primarily finances the overall coordination of United Nations mine-action

activities, all emergency humanitarian programmes, assessment missions to monitor the scope of the landmine threat, the initiation of new mine-action activities and the bridging of funding delays. The Voluntary Trust Fund has received approximately US$ 43 million since its inception. The majority of these funds have been earmarked for specific activities; however, unearmarked resources are extremely important in that they can be, if required, focused on emergency, high-priority or under-funded needs prior to the development of a consolidated appeal.

195. Donors are encouraged to consult with the United Nations Mine Action Service for information on projects that require funding and to seek its advice in order to determine which are the most appropriate financing mechanisms for their contributions. United Nations agencies, programmes and funds with mine-action programmes will continue to conduct their own fund-raising activities, and the Service will ensure that financing is channelled to these programmes in the most direct manner possible.

196. To promote this process, and to enhance transparency, the United Nations Mine Action Service has prepared a portfolio of mine-action projects. This document, developed in conjunction with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, provides a comprehensive overview of mine-related projects. Some of the projects are already included in country-specific consolidated appeals and some have no specific resource mobilization mechanisms. The portfolio will be published annually with quarterly updates and will be used as a means of ensuring complementarity between resource requirements for mine-action programmes and donor priority areas of funding humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

197. Resource mobilization is enhanced through a well-developed system of information management. Clearly articulated priorities and policies are better able to be translated into projects and programmes with measurable goals and indicators of progress. Information specifically developed for resource mobilization, such as the portfolio of mine-action projects, will be complemented with other materials to support contact with donors. Moreover, the United Nations Mine Action Service will focus on providing substantive progress reports to show contributors the results achieved by activities undertaken with their donated resources. Presenting clearly expressed projects and enhanced information materials and reporting on results will form the basic components of an integrated resource mobilization strategy.

VII. Lessons learned

198. The implementation of an holistic and integrated mine-action policy has provided a number of vital lessons. Perhaps the most compelling of these is that, with a coordinated approach and adequate resources, the landmine problem can be addressed and brought under control over a finite period of time. In addition, by promoting mine awareness through focused programmes, affected communities can learn to adapt sufficiently and to function despite the presence of landmines. Most important, humanitarian mine action has drawn attention to the problem beyond the issue of mine clearance, by advocating the total ban of anti-personnel mines.

199. The establishment of the United Nations Mine Action Service as a focal point for mine action provides the donors, humanitarian relief workers and the United Nations system with a coherent and mutually reinforcing approach to project execution, advocacy and fund-raising activities. Although the primary responsibility for taking action against the presence of landmines lies with the State or States concerned, the coordinated policy facilitates United Nations assistance in the creation of sustainable national capacities and in the implementation of overall programmes. The role and resources of local governments are, however, a critical dimension of mine action that cannot be overlooked.

200. In 1998, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat published a study, entitled "The development of indigenous mine-action capacities". Its findings served as an invaluable base in the formulation of the coordinated policy approach. A number of recommendations were made and have been duly acted upon, most notably the establishment of a clear and unitary strategy which effectively addresses the humanitarian implications of the problem; and the creation of mine action centres for the in-country management of operational and programme activities. There remains, however, the complex challenge of ensuring that quality management is practised and maintained. For example, it was recommended that programme managers in the field should have maximum delegated authority and that United Nations administrative rules should reflect this. Such a proposal would require amending institutional arrangements beyond the extent of the current reforms.

201. In the study, it was also recommended that, in a move to delegate further authority to the field, operational activities be undertaken by independently managed mine agencies, such as international and national non-governmental organizations under contract to the mine

action centre concerned. Within the context of the coordinated policy approach, significant authority has subsequently been transferred to the field.

202. From an operational perspective, the application of standards and quality control measures has proven successful in a number of cases. It is essential that the benefits of this lesson become universal. Improved monitoring of the threat is a coordination issue that needs to be further addressed. One method would be through further assessment missions and level 1 surveys.

VIII. The road ahead

203. For the past five years, the General Assembly has acknowledged the severity of the landmine problem and has resourcefully dealt with its challenges. With the entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Ottawa Convention, the international community will have formally recognized that the essence of the issue lies in its humanitarian component, a component that, in principle, transcends parochial political concerns.

204. As United Nations mine action evolves, however, the suffering in mine-affected countries continues. A lack of resources is not the only reason that programmes are hampered. Lack of political resolve also frustrates the humanitarian objectives of mine action. The role that the United Nations system plays is impartial and comprehensive, yet in some cases mine action becomes a national and international political issue.

205. The frequency and intensity of internal conflicts continue to exacerbate the problem of landmine use. Because anti-personnel mines are so inexpensive, they are easily procured and because they are so undetectable, they are indiscriminately deployed. Their significance as a psychological deterrent in many cases outweighs their tactical value. In problem countries, the percentage of previously contaminated land that has been rendered free from landmines remains small compared with those affected areas yet to be returned to the people. This situation can, however, be improved upon if a committed political will is sincerely demonstrated.

206. The endorsement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations policy paper and his prioritizing its effective implementation of the coordinated approach embodies his programme for reform while strengthening the United Nations response. Through its core components of mine awareness and risk reduction, minefield surveying, mapping and clearance, victim assistance and rehabilitation, and advocacy, the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service is clearly defined and the responsibilities of the United Nations partners articulated. The need remains, however, for continued long-term support for existing programmes. Although new issues will eventually gain the fleeting attention of the media, they should not be a signal to donors to reduce their humanitarian investment in a mine-affected country.

207. The fact that the international response to the problem has been consistently growing warrants recognition. Much has been accomplished in the area of clearance with the generous contributions of the donors but resources are limited and the competition for assistance is keen. When other areas of mine action, such as awareness and assistance to victims are factored into the equation, current levels of resources will be stretched beyond their limits.

208. Governments and regional organizations have been generous with their financial and in-kind contributions. Increased cooperation will be sought with non-traditional partners, including the community of non-governmental organizations, the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, and the private sector. The United Nations Mine Action Service, in its capacity as focal point, is positioned to coordinate within the United Nations system resource mobilization strategies and programmes. This will comprise one of several of its important future responsibilities.

209. The United Nations Mine Action Service has also planned to undertake new assessment missions and level 1 surveys, in an effort to determine precisely the true extent of the contamination problem. Once such missions are completed, programmes that will complement the findings of the surveys can begin, so as to free land for productive use again. This will assist refugees and indigenous displaced persons in their return to these areas.

210. The United Nations Mine Action Service will continue to advocate the signing the ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction by the States which have not yet done so.

211. In the area of victim assistance, the United Nations Mine Action Service will explore ways of cooperating closely with WHO, UNICEF, ICRC and non-governmental organizations in the development of new guidelines for the effective coordination of programmes to further assist in the rehabilitation of landmine victims and their return to income-generating activities in order to reintegrate them into society.

212. A broader issue for consideration by the General Assembly is that of new and enhanced technology. In many cases, manual demining is still the core of clearance operations. Improved technology means cost-effective removal and destruction, and ultimately the saving of lives.

213. Mine action is indeed about people. It is about giving them the opportunity to live in an environment free from the physical, socio-economic and psychological entrapments caused by these callous and indiscriminate killers. Through its activities, the United Nations and the United Nations Mine Action Service is committed to ensuring that those now living with the threat of landmines will have the chance to enjoy a peaceful and productive existence.

Annex I

Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance: total contributions by donor, as at 13 October 1998

(United States dollars)

Donor	*Payment*	*Pledge*	*Total*
Member States and countries with observer status			
Austria	18 348	—	18 348
Australia	789 482	—	789 482
Belgium	1 131 501	480 000	1 611 501
Brazil	3 000	—	3 000
Cambodia	1 000	—	1 000
Canada	601 046	1 450 000	2 051 046
Croatia	1 000	—	1 000
Czech Republic	22 500	—	22 500
Denmark	4 946 715	—	4 946 715
Finland	232 023	—	232 023
France	395 819	—	395 819
Germany	1 456 924	—	1 456 924
Greece	80 000	—	80 000
Holy See	4 000	—	4 000
Iceland	10 000	—	10 000
Indonesia	40 000	—	40 000
Ireland	787 841	—	787 841
Israel	98 000	—	98 000
Italy	1 205 284	—	1 205 284
Japan	7 875 865	1 686 195	9 562 060
Liechtenstein	47 656	—	47 656
Luxembourg	226 567	—	226 567
Malta	1 952	—	1 952
Monaco	27 519	—	27 519
Namibia	500	—	500
Netherlands	513 294	—	513 294
New Zealand	462 750	—	462 750
Norway	2 602 996	—	2 602 996
Portugal	150 000	—	150 000
Republic of Korea	300 000	—	300 000
Saudi Arabia	50 000	—	50 000
Slovak Republic	10 000	—	10 000
Spain	874 439	—	874 439
Sweden	1 150 804	—	1 150 804
Switzerland	3 330 568	345 000	3 675 568

Donor	*Payment*	*Pledge*	*Total*
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1 825 175	—	1 825 175
United States of America	2 200 000	—	2 200 000
Subtotal	**33 474 568**	**3 961 195**	**37 435 763**
Other sources			
European Union	9 709 768	2 365 000	12 074 768
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	10 000	—	10 000
Individuals	4 065	—	4 065
United Nations Development Programme	20 000	—	20 000
United Nations Children's Fund	20 000	—	20 000
World Food Programme	—	—	—
Subtotal	**9 763 833**	**2 365 000**	**12 128 833**
Total	**43 238 401**	**6 326 195**	**49 564 596**

Annex II

Mine action and effective coordination: United Nations policy

I. Introduction

1. Years of conflict have left millions of scattered and unrecorded landmines in more than 50 countries.[a] Civilians, children as well as adults, are more and more often targets of these sly weapons in times of war, and have become by the thousands victims of their deadly legacy in times of peace. Landmines have caused the removal of vast areas of land and resources from productive use. Countries with weak or barely existing social and economic infrastructures are often the hardest hit, and within these countries the poor are those who suffer the most and are least able to cope.

2. There is growing awareness within the international community that what has come to be known as the global landmine crisis has far-reaching consequences and requires a multifaceted and integrated response. There is also recognition that the United Nations has a key role to play in articulating this response and in providing the necessary support and coordination mechanisms. This role was reaffirmed in the successive resolutions of the General Assembly on assistance in mine clearance,[b] as well as in the amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed To Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects[c] and in the landmark Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, opened for signature at Ottawa on 3 December 1997.

3. In conformity with the expectations of affected populations, the United Nations has accumulated a great deal of experience in mine action. Programmes have been established in various countries, starting with Afghanistan in 1988 and then in Cambodia in 1992. In the light of this experience and of lessons learned, the present paper was developed to encapsulate the key principles on which United Nations mine action is based and to clarify roles and responsibilities within the United Nations system.

II. Objectives

4. The objectives of the principles developed in the present paper are threefold and complementary, that is:

(a) To foster the ability of the United Nations to support, in a coordinated, timely and effective manner, affected countries and populations in responding to the immediate and long-term problems posed by landmines;

(b) To foster the ability of the United Nations to support and build upon the collective efforts of the international community at large;

(c) To strengthen the credibility of the United Nations in terms of transparency, accountability and effectiveness.

III. Nature of mine action

5. Mine action refers to all activities geared towards addressing the problems faced by populations as a result of landmine contamination. It is not so much about mines as it is about people and their interaction with a mine-infested environment. Its aim is not technical, that is, to survey, mark and eradicate landmines, but rather humanitarian and developmental, that is, to recreate an environment in which people can live safely, in which economic, social and health development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination, and in which the needs of victims are addressed.

6. A distinction has sometimes been made between operational mine action (i.e., mine action in support of operations mandated by the Security Council), humanitarian mine action, and mine action in support of reconstruction and development. The United Nations does not adhere to this distinction, since it does not reflect the fact that there is considerable overlapping among the various aspects of a country's recovery, that is, peacekeeping and peace-building, reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons, revival of communities, reconstruction and development. What really matters is the establishment of clear priorities in relation to the needs of the affected populations.

7. Given the importance of an integrated and holistic response to the issue of landmine contamination and the need to bring real and lasting support to those at risk, United Nations mine action encompasses four complementary core components: (a) mine awareness and risk reduction education; (b) minefield survey, mapping, marking and clearance; (c) assistance to victims, including rehabilitation

and reintegration; (d) advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines and support a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. In support of these core components, other activities will be a key to the success of mine action and mine-action programmes, such as resource mobilization, national/local capacity-building and the requisite institutional support (including human resource development of local counterparts from both government and civil society), information management (including the conduct of assessment missions, surveys and, more generally, data-gathering), training of personnel (in all mine-related responsibilities, including management) and quality management (including setting of standards and programme monitoring and evaluation).

IV. Guiding principles

A. Scope and nature of the landmine problem

8. Landmines are first and foremost a humanitarian concern and must be addressed from this perspective. They are also an impediment to rehabilitation and sustainable development. The nature and scope of the landmine problem must be defined in terms of its humanitarian, public health and socio-economic implications, including, in particular, its impact on lives, livelihoods, the provision of humanitarian assistance and, more generally, an environment which should be safe and conducive to peace-building, reconstruction and development.

9. All relevant information on landmine contamination and its humanitarian and socio-economic consequences should be provided to the United Nations Mine Action Service, through the United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators in the field or other partners as appropriate, so that a comprehensive profile of the landmine problem can be developed and early action initiated.

B. Principles for United Nations assistance in mine action

10. In dealing with the landmine problem, the United Nations will respect the fundamental humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity so that priority is given to those who are most vulnerable. Training or support for mine action will not, in principle, be provided to the militaries of mine-contaminated countries.

11. The United Nations will take every opportunity to stigmatize the continuing use of landmines and to support a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. In order to receive assistance, relevant parties should be committed to supporting mine action actively, and to desisting from producing, stockpiling, using and transferring anti-personnel landmines. When applicable, this commitment should form an integral part of peace treaties, ceasefire agreements and peace-building arrangements.

12. Exceptions to the above principle should be based only on humanitarian considerations. Humanitarian mine-action activities which are focused on reducing immediate threats to the well-being of affected communities and to the activities of humanitarian workers should not be subject to conditionalities related to the continuing use of landmines.

C. Notion of integrated and sustainable mine action

13. The United Nations supports an holistic approach to mine action, addressing its various elements in a complementary manner both at the field level and headquarters level. Mine-awareness and risk-reduction education, minefield mapping, marking and clearance, victim assistance and rehabilitation, advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines and support for a comprehensive ban are all integral parts of mine action.

14. This holistic approach requires that appropriate attention be given to the issues of national ownership, sustainability and capacity-building. In countries which have long-term needs, mine-action programmes must be sustainable and should include as a key component the development of a national/local capacity, from the outset of mine-action activities and throughout the development of integrated programmes. A national/local capacity (formed most often under the auspices of a Government or local authorities) is characterized by its ability to develop and articulate overall policy and direction, as well as to plan, coordinate, manage and sustain a programme that is accountable, cost-effective and able to address the humanitarian and socio-economic implications of landmine contamination.

15. Mine-action initiatives must also be an integral component of strategies designed to rehabilitate health care, education, infrastructure, agriculture and marketing systems, to name but a few of the requirements of societies recovering from violent conflicts.

D. Requirement for effective coordination

16. To ensure effective coordination within the United Nations system, all mine-action activities will be organized in consultation with the United Nations Mine Action Service and with the United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators in the field, as appropriate.

17. When programmes are initiated in the field, coordination mechanisms should be established to ensure that strategic and forward planning takes place and that country-wide mine-action activities are consistently integrated, monitored and reviewed (this includes mine awareness in refugee camps in neighbouring countries and mine clearance related to peacekeeping missions, when applicable).

18. As part of these coordination mechanisms, a database should be developed and a level 1 survey (followed by a level 2 survey) should be undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity.

19. Donors, non-governmental organizations, and other entities concerned with the problem of landmines should be encouraged to coordinate their activities with the United Nations Mine Action Service and with the United Nations and local authorities responsible for mine action in the field.

20. The United Nations Mine Action Service will ensure that regular monitoring and lessons-learned missions are conducted, and that insights gained from particular experiences are shared with all interested parties.

E. Initiation and development of mine-action programmes in the field

21. Action to address the mine problem must begin as early as possible when there is a recognized need. It should include, in particular, assessments and level 1 surveys, awareness and risk-reduction education, assistance to victims and advocacy to stigmatize the use of landmines.

22. Without prejudice to the existing mandates and accountability of agencies, all requests for assistance in mine action should be reviewed in consultation with the United Nations Mine Action Service. When justified by the circumstances, and as a first step of a United Nations response, the United Nations Mine Action Service should, as soon as possible and in consultation with the United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, organize a multidisciplinary and multisectoral assessment to define the scope and nature of the problem, to identify constraints and opportunities relating to the development of mine-action initiatives and to make recommendations for a comprehensive response, including institutional arrangements for the coordination and implementation of mine-action activities.

23. The primary responsibility for taking action against the presence of landmines lies with the concerned State. Thus, in principle, the Government of the affected country should assume overall responsibility for the coordination and management of a national mine-action programme. When required, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in consultation with all stakeholders, including the United Nations Mine Action Service, relevant local partners, non-governmental organizations, donors and United Nations entities, should assist in creating sustainable national capacities and in preparing and implementing an overall programme plan.

24. In circumstances in which the United Nations has to initiate a programme under its auspices, either because of the requirement to meet urgent humanitarian and operational needs or because of the absence of recognized national authorities, the United Nations Mine Action Service will develop the initial programme plan, in consultation with all stakeholders, including relevant local partners, non-governmental organizations, donors and United Nations entities. This plan should clearly define objectives, priorities, institutional arrangements and other requirements, including technical and financial support, as well as modalities to undertake specific activities. It should be designed to meet critical urgent needs, as well as the long-term requirements essential for the development of a sustainable national/local capacity, when applicable.

25. When required, transitional arrangements for the provision of United Nations support to the ongoing development of a sustainable national/local capacity in mine action should be identified and clearly defined at the earliest stage in order to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities. Such arrangements should be decided on a case-by-case basis but will normally be implemented when the national authority assumes responsibility for the coordination and management of the overall mine-action programme originally developed under United Nations auspices.

26. Whenever practical and in order to facilitate the transition process when required, the United Nations entity responsible for providing logistical, financial and administrative support to a mine-action programme during the initiation phase will continue to be responsible for this support throughout the development of the programme.

F. Requirement for prioritization and accountability

27. All programmes should have well-established mechanisms to set priorities for mine-action activities on the basis of need and the most effective use of available resources. While it must be remembered that no two situations are alike, priorities for mine clearance will often include, *inter alia*, the following: provision of emergency assistance; settled land with high civilian casualty rates; land required for the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons; land required for agriculture; community development; access to and free operation of health services; reconstruction; and infrastructure development.

28. Clearly-defined accountability mechanisms should also be incorporated in programmes in order to ensure that priority needs are met and that there is cost-effective use of available resources. Periodic review exercises should also be undertaken in order to determine overall effectiveness in approach, orientation and implementation, and to advise on which changes, if any, need to be introduced.

V. Responsibilities and coordination mechanisms

A. Role and responsibilities of United Nations partners

Mine Action Service

29. The Mine Action Service, Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat, is the focal point within the United Nations system for all mine-related activities. In this capacity, it is responsible for ensuring an effective, proactive and coordinated United Nations response to landmine contamination. The Service, in consultation with other partners, will establish priorities for assessment missions, facilitate a coherent and constructive dialogue with the donor and international communities on the mine issue and coordinate the mobilization of resources. It is also responsible for: (a) the development, maintenance and promotion of technical and safety standards (a responsibility which will be delegated to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with regard to mine awareness and to the World Health Organization (WHO) with regard to the public health aspect of victim assistance); (b) the collection, analysis and dissemination of mine-related information, including information on technology; (c) advocacy efforts in support of a global ban on anti-personnel landmines; and (d) for the management of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

Department for Disarmament Affairs

30. The Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with the Mine Action Service and other entities of the Organization, will support the role of the Secretary-General in relation to the Ottawa Convention. The specific responsibilities of the Department relate to the provisions of two articles: article 7, on transparency measures, and article 8, on facilitation and clarification of compliance.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

31. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat is responsible for sharing all relevant information with the Mine Action Service and other partners regarding the humanitarian implications of landmines. It will work to ensure that humanitarian needs are met as an integral component of the overall humanitarian endeavour. It will advocate a global ban on anti-personnel landmines and for assistance to victims. The Office will also work closely with the Mine Action Service on resource mobilization, in its capacity as manager of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and coordinator of the consolidated appeal process.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

32. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will ensure that the needs of refugees and other populations of concern to UNHCR are met. In particular, it will work with UNICEF to develop appropriate mine-awareness programmes in refugee camps and with the World Food Programme (WFP) for the safe delivery of food.

United Nations Children's Fund

33. The United Nations Children's Fund, working in collaboration with the Mine Action Service, is the United Nations focal point on mine-awareness education. In this capacity, it will provide appropriate guidance for all mine-awareness programmes, in close liaison with concerned partners such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, WFP, UNHCR, WHO and UNDP. In collaboration with WHO, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other partners where appropriate, UNICEF will ensure the comprehensive rehabilitation of

landmine victims, which includes psychosocial counselling, physical rehabilitation (including the provision of prosthetics and orthotics) and education for those with disabilities. In addition, UNICEF will continue to be an active advocate for the promotion of a total ban on anti-personnel landmines and the ratification of the Ottawa Convention.

United Nations Development Programme

34. Within the United Nations system, United Nations Development Programme will be responsible for addressing the socio-economic consequences of landmine contamination and for supporting national/local capacity-building to ensure the elimination of the obstacle that they pose to the resumption of normal economic activity, reconstruction and development. When applicable, UNDP will have primary responsibility for the development of integrated, sustainable national/local mine-action programmes in situations in which the problem of landmines is not only a humanitarian emergency. It will work closely with the Mine Action Service and share all relevant information.

United Nations Office for Project Services

35. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) is a principal service provider within the United Nations system for integrated mine-action and capacity-building programmes. It will implement mine-action programmes, as appropriate, in collaboration with concerned partners (Mine Action Service, UNDP and others). As its mandate enables it to work with all United Nations agencies, UNOPS will be instrumental in providing the continuity of implementation required for mine-action programmes.

World Food Programme

36. The World Food Programme is involved in mine action in relation to its mandate to provide food assistance. Its three main areas of concern are: (a) the clearance of access roads for the speedy and cost-effective delivery of food assistance; (b) the clearance of land required for the safe return of displaced populations; and (c) the clearance of crop land for agricultural use in order to promote sustainable levels of local food production.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

37. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is involved in mine clearance in relation to its humanitarian agricultural relief activities in countries affected by complex emergencies. The definition of criteria for the selection of priority sites requiring mine clearance is a prerequisite to the formulation of humanitarian relief and short-term rehabilitation interventions.

World Bank

38. As a development agency, the World Bank supports programmes in member countries which help lead to the eradication of poverty and to the promotion of sustainable development. Its support of mine action is based upon the recognition that mine pollution is, for many affected countries, a significant obstacle to the re-establishment of normal development activities. In this context, it shares with UNDP a perspective which views mine pollution as a development problem with long-term consequences and, necessarily, with long-term solutions which extend far beyond initial humanitarian concerns. Globally, the Bank shares responsibility with UNDP for convening donor groups in reconstruction situations and thus has a major role to play in resource mobilization and in setting long-term agendas for international support for mine action and other needs. It works closely with all United Nations departments and agencies.

World Health Organization

39. Within the framework of its mandate as expressed by its Executive Board at its 101st session, WHO will be responsible for the development of appropriate standards and methodologies, as well as the promotion of health service capacity-building for sustainable victim assistance, through the ministries of health of affected countries. It will provide public technical health support to the various United Nations partners involved in mine action, and cooperate closely with UNICEF and ICRC.

B. Contributions of like-minded partners

40. The United Nations welcomes and acknowledges all contributions to mine action made by like-minded partners from both government and civil society. It recognizes in particular the instrumental role played by the community of non-governmental organizations and ICRC in raising public awareness of the landmine issue and addressing the needs of those at risk. In articulating and developing its mine-action policy and activities, the United Nations strives to give due consideration to the concerns of all parties.

Non-governmental organizations

41. The humanitarian mine-action non-governmental organizations are important contributors to the building up

of indigenous capacities to respond to the consequences of landmines. Experienced humanitarian mine-action non-governmental organizations have the capacity to effectively transfer skills related to mine-awareness education, mine survey and marking, mine clearance, data collection, analysis and programme management. Their contributions to the promotion of safety and quality assurance standards, to the development of community-based prioritization of resource deployment based on humanitarian need and to the raising of local and global consciousness of the landmine problem (and its moral implications) render them a valuable source of insight, advice and operational capacity. Often working with affected communities prior to United Nations involvement in a mine-affected country, non-governmental organizations are important partners in the development of policies for the implementation of integrated, coherent and cost-effective mine-action programming.[d]

International Committee of the Red Cross

42. The International Committee of the Red Cross acts to help all victims of war and internal violence and endeavours to ensure implementation of humanitarian rules restricting armed violence. In dealing with the scourge of landmines, ICRC has encouraged the international community to adopt a public health approach, comprising preventive, curative and rehabilitative measures. While these measures include as a key element humanitarian mine clearance, the efforts of ICRC have focused on advocacy, mine-awareness and risk-reduction education, and assistance to landmine victims (first aid, surgery, rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration). The International Committee of the Red Cross encourages efforts to promote better field cooperation and coordination in order to avoid duplication and waste of human and material resources.

C. Coordination and liaison groups

43. The Mine Action Service will ensure that the mine issue is addressed appropriately, in the context of existing coordination mechanisms. These mechanisms include the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs at the headquarters level, and the meeting of the United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and United Nations country team at the field level. The Service will also ensure that all like-minded partners outside the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, ICRC and other components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, are fully involved.

44. An Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, will support the overall inter-agency coordination of United Nations mine-action initiatives and activities. It will include, *inter alia*, representatives of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNOPS, WFP, FAO, the World Bank and WHO.

45. A Steering Committee on Mine Action, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, will support the coordination of United Nations mine-action initiatives with those of non-United Nations partners. In addition to the members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, it will include, *inter alia*, representatives of ICRC and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

VI. Resources[e]

A. Overall approach and activities required in support of resource mobilization

46. Transparency, timeliness, accountability and cost-effectiveness are the guiding principles behind all resource mobilization efforts in support of mine action throughout the United Nations system.

47. The various United Nations actors will continue to conduct their own fund-raising activities for mine action, both in the field and at the headquarters level. They will, however, coordinate these activities with the Mine Action Service in order to ensure that they are coherent and mutually reinforcing. Donor meetings on mine action will be coordinated with the Mine Action Service.

48. In order to secure the consistency of United Nations mine action, and unless exceptional circumstances make it clearly impractical to do so, new mine-related projects and initiatives, if they are not already part of an ongoing United Nations programme, will be discussed with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action before being submitted for funding to the international community.

49. The Mine Action Service will initiate regular consultations with all partners involved, through the Steering Committee on Mine Action, to set priorities for mine action with a view to sharing them with the international community.

50. Where specific funds are made available in support of mine action in general, such as in the case of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships,[f] the Mine Action Service will coordinate the United Nations approach and serve as the focal point.

51. In situations where country-specific consolidated appeals exist and mine-action projects are ongoing or deemed necessary, such projects will be included in the appeals. In its capacity as coordinator of the consolidated appeal process, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs will ensure that the Mine Action Service is consulted.

52. In order to assist donors in determining how best to utilize their resources, the Mine Action Service will prepare each year a comprehensive portfolio of mine-action projects, outlining the resources required for all such projects. This document will take into consideration those projects which are already included in country-specific consolidated appeals, as well as those for which similar resource mobilization mechanisms do not exist. It will be utilized in support of donor meetings and pledging conferences.

53. Implementing agencies will ensure that the necessary mechanisms are established in the field to exchange information on a regular basis with the international community and provide it with updates on the status of United Nations programmes and budget requirements, as well as detailed financial statements of income and expenditure.

54. The Mine Action Service should be provided with the information required to maintain and discuss the portfolio of mine-action projects at any given time with members of the international community, as well as an updated financial summary of past and ongoing mine-related operations (including cash contributions, donations in-kind and secondment of personnel).

B. Support mechanisms

1. Financing mechanisms

55. Although the resources raised for mine action are for the most part channelled through the United Nations system, they may also be channelled through external partners (e.g., non-governmental organizations) if so required for cost-effectiveness purposes.

56. The Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance is used primarily to finance the overall coordination of United Nations mine action, the conduct of assessment missions to monitor the scope of the landmine threat and the programmes established to deal with it, the initiation of new mine-action activities and programmes when and where required, and the bridging of funding delays in ongoing programmes.

57. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund is designed as a cash-flow mechanism to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of the organizations of the United Nations system to requests for emergency assistance. It can be used only to make advances to United Nations organizations and entities. These advances have to be reimbursed as a first charge against the voluntary contributions received in response to consolidated appeals.

58. For programmes which have to be sustained in the long term, specific trust funds should be established within the financing agency as soon as possible. The objective of these trust funds is to allow for the principles of transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness to be respected.

59. Mine action in support of peacekeeping operations will continue to be financed exclusively by peacekeeping budgets and resources, to the exclusion of resources drawn from the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance.

60. The resources of the World Bank are primarily provided on the basis of interest-free credits or loans. Resources are provided directly to Governments, which own the process and are responsible for execution. Many Governments have, to date, chosen to draw upon humanitarian grants for demining. There is, however, significant potential for increased support from the Bank's credits or loans for financing mine action if (a) member Governments decide that this use of the resources of the Bank is appropriate, and (b) borrower Governments require resources for mine action beyond those available from grant sources.

2. Monitoring and reporting to donors

61. Implementing agencies in charge of country programmes are responsible for submitting regular progress and financial reports to donors. These reports should take into consideration cash contributions, as well as in-kind contributions and secondment of personnel. They should provide sufficient details on the origin of the resources made available and on the expenditure incurred against those resources.

62. On an annual basis, the Mine Action Service will prepare a financial statement related to mine action for distribution to the donor community.

Notes

[a] Throughout the annex, landmine is used to refer to both landmines and unexploded ordnances.

[b] See, in particular, resolution 52/173 of 18 December 1997.

[c] Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996.

[d] Various guidelines and policy documents have been developed by the community of non-governmental organizations on the landmine issue. Two examples are: (a) the so-called "Bad Honnef guidelines", originally drafted by the German Campaign to Ban Landmines and subsequently discussed and revised at an international Symposium held at Bad Honnef on 23 and 24 June 1997; and (b) the Statement of Principles, jointly issued by Handicap International, the Mines Advisory Group and Norwegian People's Aid at Brussels on 21 November 1997.

[e] The term "resources" refers not only to financial contributions but also to in-kind donations (material, equipment, personnel and services).

[f] The Fund serves as an interface with the United Nations Foundation Inc., established by Ted Turner.